This is a digital copy of a book that was preserved for generations on library shelves before it was carefully scanned by Google as part of a project to make the world's books discoverable online.

It has survived long enough for the copyright to expire and the book to enter the public domain. A public domain book is one that was never subject to copyright or whose legal copyright term has expired. Whether a book is in the public domain may vary country to country. Public domain books are our gateways to the past, representing a wealth of history, culture and knowledge that's often difficult to discover.

Marks, notations and other marginalia present in the original volume will appear in this file - a reminder of this book's long journey from the publisher to a library and finally to you.

Usage guidelines

Google is proud to partner with libraries to digitize public domain materials and make them widely accessible. Public domain books belong to the public and we are merely their custodians. Nevertheless, this work is expensive, so in order to keep providing this resource, we have taken steps to prevent abuse by commercial parties, including placing technical restrictions on automated querying.

We also ask that you:

+ *Make non-commercial use of the files* We designed Google Book Search for use by individuals, and we request that you use these files for personal, non-commercial purposes.

+ *Refrain from automated querying* Do not send automated queries of any sort to Google's system: If you are conducting research on machine translation, optical character recognition or other areas where access to a large amount of text is helpful, please contact us. We encourage the use of public domain materials for these purposes and may be able to help.

+ *Maintain attribution* The Google "watermark" you see on each file is essential for informing people about this project and helping them find additional materials through Google Book Search. Please do not remove it.

+ *Keep it legal* Whatever your use, remember that you are responsible for ensuring that what you are doing is legal. Do not assume that just because we believe a book is in the public domain for users in the United States, that the work is also in the public domain for users in other countries. Whether a book is still in copyright varies from country to country, and we can't offer guidance on whether any specific use of any specific book is allowed. Please do not assume that a book's appearance in Google Book Search means it can be used in any manner anywhere in the world. Copyright infringement liability can be quite severe.

About Google Book Search

Google's mission is to organize the world's information and to make it universally accessible and useful. Google Book Search helps readers discover the world's books while helping authors and publishers reach new audiences. You can search through the full text of this book on the web at `http://books.google.com/`

Mind of Christ.

The Mind of Christ.

THOUGHTS DERIVED FROM THE

History of our Lord's Temptation and Passion,

ARRANGED AS AIDS TO MEDITATION.

BY THE

REV. VERNON W. HUTTON, B.A.,

VICAR OF SNEINTON, NOTTINGHAM.

LONDON:

E. LONGHURST, CHURCH BOOKSELLER,

30 NEW BRIDGE STREET, BLACKFRIARS, AND

119 UPPER KENNINGTON LANE, S.E.

1879.

141. 922. 887.

PREFACE.

THIS Book is written for the purpose of assisting those who are seeking to enter into the mind of their Divine MASTER, and who feel the need of some such help as is here offered to them. The title-page will sufficiently explain the nature of the work. It has not been my object to write a series of discourses, or of fully developed meditations, but simply to offer a few germs of thought, clothed in the plainest language, some of which may, I hope, prove fruit-bearing in the minds of others. I have not attempted to cast the thoughts into one uniform mould; I have let each flow freely as it developed itself in my own mind. Neither have I attempted to reduce each meditation to a *definite* resolution. I have avoided this

purposely; I feel that if a resolution is to be of any benefit to a soul, it must not be mine, but it must proceed from the SPIRIT of GOD working within it. I can do no more than offer suggestions as to the form the resolution might take.

If will be evident to most readers that I have often interwoven the thoughts of others with my own, and that in a few instances the groundwork of the meditation has been derived from other writers. I have not thought it necessary, in a book of this character, to give references. I content myself with this general acknowledgment. I trust that I have never made use of the thought of another until it has become thoroughly assimilated in my own mind. Where different interpretations of any passage exist, I have of necessity definitely adopted one of them, leaving the others unnoticed. In doing this, I have not blindly followed any one authority; but after consulting such books as I have at command, I have

chosen that interpretation which on careful thought seemed to me to be the true one.

Should these thoughts prove useful to any of CHRIST'S people, I hope that if time and opportunity are granted to me, I may be able to extend them so as to include the whole of the wondrous Gospel story. It is in the Life which is there revealed to us that Christians must look for a restoration of their true unity. Just as far as He Who lived that Life is working out that same Life in each one of us, just so far shall we, through our union with Him, be in union with one another.

SNEINTON, *Advent*, 1878.

I.

The Great Battle between our True Lord and the False One.

ST. MATT. iv. 1, 2. ST. MARK, i. 12, 13.

I. CONSIDER (1) the time; (2) the place; (3) the occasion.

1. The time. Immediately after His baptism, after the descent of the Holy SPIRIT and the Voice from Heaven; His true mission has been made known, He has been declared the SON of GOD. But the SPIRIT is given Him, not to release Him from human trials, but to strengthen Him for them. 'He scourgeth every son whom He receiveth.' (Heb. xii. 6.) If this is the beloved SON He must enter into the forefront of the battle.

2. The place, the wilderness. Contrast this with the garden in which the first temptation took place. By Adam's fall the garden is turned into a wilderness. JESUS goes out into the wilderness to win back Paradise for us.

3. The occasion. He has a fresh consciousness of His powers. Is He to use them for

Himself, or for the glory of His FATHER? This is the conflict of His human life, as it is of every human life.

II.—1. We are to expect temptation, especially after a time of spiritual fervour. JESUS was tempted in the wilderness after His baptism; the Israelites were tempted in the wilderness after their deliverance from Egypt. We often find ourselves in a spiritual wilderness after some special season of grace.

2. JESUS found strength to resist temptation by meditating upon the history of the temptation of the Israelites. He draws all His weapons of defence from the Book of Deuteronomy, the history of the temptation in the wilderness. We may gather courage by remembering that to endure temptation is the lot of all GOD'S people. It is part of the Communion of Saints.

3. Therefore we learn that to be with JESUS is not to be free from temptation. It is to be with Him Who is tempted in all points as we are, yet without sin.

II.

The First Temptation of Life is to doubt God's Love.

St. Matt. iv. 3, 4.

I.—1. Consider the craftiness with which the temptation is suggested. Jesus is fainting for lack of food. Can such a one be the Son of God? Would God have thus left His dearly-beloved? Let Him prove that He is the Son, and then we will believe.

2. It is a temptation to doubt the truth of the Voice which He heard, 'This is my beloved Son.' To have consented to test its truth by working a miracle would have been to share the doubt; and it would have been more than this, it would have been to undo the work of His incarnation. He had come to share in human life, with all its hardships. If He had fallen back upon His supernatural power to escape from these hardships, He would not have fulfilled the purpose of His Father.

3. For this reason He meets the temptation not in His power as God, but as man. 'It is written, *Man* doth not live by bread alone.'

He enrolls Himself as a man among men. He becomes our champion. To turn stones into bread might have gratified man's lower nature, but to do GOD's will is the food of his higher nature (St. John, iv. 34.)

II.—1. One of the first temptations we meet with in our wilderness life is *to doubt* GOD's *love.* If we are the children of GOD, as in our moments of spiritual fervour we feel that we are, why does He often leave us without sensible comfort? Surely He cannot really love us; let us break away from Him, and follow the promptings of our lower nature. Such is the suggestion of the tempter.

2. And the answer: 'Man doth not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of GOD.' The higher life is only attained by obedience to GOD's will, and by accepting the trials which He appoints for us. This is our true spiritual food.

3. Truly in the wilderness there is temptation, but in the wilderness also there is Bread from Heaven. We have meat to eat which the world knows not of; for the Kingdom of GOD is not meat and drink, but righteousness, and peace, and joy in the HOLY GHOST.

III.

To Presume on our Sonship to God is as bad as to Doubt it.

ST. MATT. iv. 5–7.

I. JESUS has conquered His first temptation. He has trusted with an unbounded trust in the FATHER's love. He knows that His FATHER will protect Him in all dangers.

His second temptation takes advantage of this sense of confidence. The evil one having failed to make our Lord doubt, now seeks to win Him by flattery: 'Certainly Thou art the Son of GOD; trust Him utterly; care not for consequences; canst Thou trust Him too much? Is there not Scripture authority for it?' But the tempter leaves out one condition of the trust, and by doing so, entirely alters the character of the promise: 'He will give His angels charge over Thee, *to keep Thee in all Thy ways.*' (Ps. xci. 11, 12.) To throw Himself into uncalled-for danger was not one of the ways appointed for the CHRIST. It is not for *a son to presume* upon a father's love, and

expect that love to protect him from the consequences of his own acts. This is tempting GOD.

II.—1. In our wilderness life, after we have overcome the temptation to despair we are oftentimes tempted to *presume*, to feel that we are safe. The tempter sometimes makes us long rashly for harder trials, so that we may show how much we can trust GOD. If GOD wills that we should be in temptation, it is well. He will give His angels charge over us. But if we thrust ourselves unnecessarily into temptation, it is not well; it is tempting GOD, it is not our appointed way, there are no angels there.

2. JESUS, though He were a SON, yet learned He obedience. *To obey* our Father is a truer sign of sonship than to *presume* on His love.

IV.

Good Ends only to be obtained by the use of Right Means.

ST. MATT. iv. 8–10. ST. LUKE, iv. 5–8.

I.—1. This third temptation must have been the greatest of all. It was not that JESUS cared for earthly possessions; these were nothing to Him. But He did care that the kingdoms of the world should become the kingdoms of GOD. It was the object of His Incarnation. Here they are offered to Him; they shall be His in a moment; Satan will surrender them to Him.

2. It was a temptation to avoid the Cross. As true Man He shrunk from it. Could not the end now be gained by a shorter and easier road? And not only would He be spared from His own cross, but all the weary struggle with sin which each human soul has to undergo would be needed no more. What an offer! And the price? Just one sin, one act of worshipping evil. What a glorious result for just one sin! Might not so small an amount of evil be permitted for so great a good?

3. JESUS has no hesitation about the answer: 'Thou shalt worship the LORD thy GOD, and Him only shalt thou serve.'

II.—1. It is no unfrequent temptation; to seek good ends by evil methods, to overcome the opposition of evil by partially giving way to it.

2. No such giving way to evil can be allowed. 'Thou shalt worship the LORD thy GOD.' Do right, come what may.

3. Not only is such a course sinful, it is also mistaken. If JESUS had consented, and had received the kingdoms of the world in return for His compliance with the tempter's demand, the gain might have been apparently His, but in reality it would have been Satan's. JESUS would have received the shadow, and lost the reality; the act by which He appeared to gain the world would have been the means of His losing it.

4. GOD'S cause is promoted, not by our scheming, but by our obedience. We may appear to gain good ends by unlawful means; we shall find that we have in reality lost that which we hoped to have.

V.

The Ministry of the Angels.

ST. MATT. iv. 11. ST. LUKE, iv. 13.

I. The first great conflict is over, and JESUS remains Victor. Temptation in all its forms has assailed Him, and is overcome. Now the angels come to minister to Him. The angels are those Blessed Spirits who are ever doing the FATHER'S will. When we do our FATHER'S will, we are one with them, and enter into their fellowship. The angels were ever ministering to our Lord; they are ever ministering to us when we are one with Him. He did not find the angels in any self-chosen path (it was Satan's temptation that He would find them *there*), but He found them in simple trust and obedience. 'Jacob went on his way, and the angels of GOD met him.' (Gen. xxxii. 1.)

II.—1. Is it not a matter of simple experience that when temptation has been resisted, the devil leaves us (St. James, iv. 7), and angels *come and minister* to us? What else is that

sense of peace through strife than the ministry of angels, real but unseen? How true do we find it that in doing our FATHER'S will and in living on Him, 'Man doth eat angels' food!'

2. If we are in temptation let us remember that JESUS has overcome it, and that He will overcome it in us if we trust ourselves into His hands. 'To him that overcometh will I grant to sit with Me in My throne, even as I also overcame, and am set down with My FATHER in His throne.'

VI.

The Battle renewed.

ST. MATT. xvi. 21–23.

I. Our LORD had now been engaged in His active ministry for more than two years. During that time He had been leading His disciples to recognise Him as the CHRIST the SON of GOD. At last their faith is formed (ver. 16). Having taught them this, He must now lead them on to the more difficult doctrine of the Cross. For the first time He definitely announces to them His approaching death. They stumble at it. The disciple who had owned his Master to be the SON of GOD, has not yet learned the greatness of humiliation; he has much to go through before he can learn it. Our LORD sees in his words a return of the temptation to avoid the Cross which He had met and conquered in the wilderness. It was a true temptation. Mark the vehemence of His language: 'Get thee behind Me, Satan.' It was immediately after He had been declared to be the beloved SON that He was tempted to escape the *Cross; it is imm*ediately after that title had been

revealed by His FATHER to one of His disciples that the temptation returns, and (strange inconsistency of human nature!) by the mouth of the very same disciple.

II.—1. The temptation to escape from the Cross evidently never ceased to assail our LORD. We saw it at the beginning of His ministry; it is here in its very centre; we shall see it renewed with intenser force as the end draws near.

2. The temptation to avoid the cross is a life-long temptation which assails every true member of CHRIST. It may approach us even through the instrumentality of our dearest friends: even those who are ready to recognise and to admire the genuine working of the SPIRIT of GOD within us, may yet tempt us to avoid the cross. Unconsciously they become the mouthpiece of the evil one. But if it is the crōss which our Master has given us to bear, and not merely one which we have chosen for ourselves, we must resist every temptation to abandon it, for to abandon it is to abandon Him.

VII.

The Cross and its Reward.

ST. MATT. xvi. 24–28. ST. LUKE, ix. 23–27.

I.—1. Not only must the disciples learn that the way of the Cross is the way by which their Lord must be perfected, they must also learn that for each of themselves the same way was marked out.

They must learn that it is only in accepting the cross that they can find their true life; that even if they could gain the whole world (*i.e.* the sum total of all outward things) by shrinking from the cross, they would be the losers by their choice, for the real inward life towards GOD would have been forfeited thereby, and if that is forfeited, what worldly possession could help them to regain it? JESUS had conquered the temptation to gain the whole world, for it could only be gained by the worship of Satan, which would have been the forfeiture of His soul, His true life.

2. In order that the disciples may be encouraged thus to follow His footsteps, He promises them that He will come again to

reward those who have not been ashamed of Him and of His cross. This coming of His is not to be postponed to the dim future, but (in a partial sense at least) is to take place before the death of some who were listening to Him. They would live to recognise the spiritual triumph of His Kingdom, and the overthrow of that Jewish world which was so bitterly hostile to them.

II.—1. The call to bear the cross, and the promised reward to those who will bear it *for His sake*, are true for all time and for all men.

2. Each has to bear *his* cross, that which comes to him through the circumstances of his life, or through his natural disposition.

3. In bearing this cross (which is a daily task) we are finding our true life; all possessions apart from this are absolutely worthless.

4. All who thus bear their cross shall see the Son of Man coming in His Kingdom; even in this life they shall recognise something of the power and the glory of that Kingdom; much more shall they see it in its full development in the life which is yet to come.

VIII.

The Cross an Object of Desire.

ST. MARK, x. 32-34.

I. WHILE JESUS had, as true Man, a natural dread of the Cross, as the perfect SON He longed for it. The earnestness of His manner here depicted testifies the keenness of His desire.

1. He longed for the Cross for His FATHER'S sake: it was His FATHER'S will, and until that will had been fulfilled, the insult which sin had offered to Him had not yet been repaired. He knew that He could not win men back to His FATHER until He had passed through the Cross.

2. He longed for the Cross for man's sake. He was Man Himself; He saw what man had made of himself; He knew what man might become through the Cross; how he would receive His Spirit, and be filled with Him.

3. But although He longed for the Cross, He *never hastened it.* He had many opportunities

of doing so, but He ever waited until 'the hour had come.'

II. 'Behold *we* go up to Jerusalem.' It is as if He invited each one of us to accompany Him to the Cross. Is it right for us to long for the cross? to desire for some more difficult work for GOD than has been given to us? If we desire it with a pure motive for GOD'S sake, and for man's sake, we may long for it. But it is always best and safest simply to desire that GOD'S Will should be done in us, be that Will what it may. GOD is most honoured when we do our duty in that state of life to which it pleases Him to call us; all unrest proceeds from imagining that we could do our duty better in some state of life to which it has *not* pleased GOD to call us.

IX.

God ever brings Good out of Evil.

ST. JOHN, xi. 47-53.

I.—1. We have seen JESUS moving onward to His Cross; see here His enemies moving onward to the same issue. How varied are the motives which play their part in producing every event of life!

2. Contrast JESUS, consumed with self-sacrificing love, with these chief priests and Pharisees who are filled with selfish fear lest they should lose their place and nation. '*Our* nation!' they had forgotten, or they had ceased to care, that they were GOD'S. Contrast the True High Priest who has but one ruling principle (which is the fundamental principle of sacrifice), 'LO, I come to do Thy will, O GOD,' with this false high-priest who is led, not by principle, but by expediency, and who is ready to sacrifice One Whom he might have known as the Holy One of GOD, if by so doing he can retain the comfortable position which the Roman conquerors had conferred upon him. Could the two opposing principles of

GOD and self be brought into more vivid contrast?

3. But, thanks be to GOD, out of evil comes good. 'Ye thought evil against me, but GOD meant it unto good, to bring to pass, as it is this day, to save much people alive.' (Gen. L. 20.) The gathering of the nations into one body, which Judaism abominated and which the Roman empire had attempted in vain to accomplish by material force, has been effected by the Cross which Jews and Romans conspired together to set up.

II.—1. Learn how GOD may use even the sins of men to promote His glory. How much patient endurance, faith, self-sacrifice, have been called into being through the sins of others! how often have this same patience and love been the means of winning those others when nothing else could win them!

2. The proposal of Caiaphas (which was completely successful) did not prevent the Romans from taking away the place and nation of the Jews, on the contrary it only hastened the catastrophe; neither did it destroy JESUS as he had anticipated; on the contrary, it won to His side Joseph, Nicodemus, Saul, and the millions who have been drawn to His Cross.

X.

The Offering of Precious Ointment.

ST. MARK, xiv. 3–9. ST. JOHN, xii. 1–8.

I.—1. This scene marks the commencement of the final act of our LORD'S passion. He Himself connects it with His burial. This act of Mary was a shadow of the offering which He was about to make, an outburst of adoring love, an offering of her best. There was one standing by who rebuked it, there is always some Judas ready to sneer at every expression of devotion. JESUS, on the contrary, saw her action to be a fruit-bearing action, for noble impulse begets noble impulse, and love begets love. Therefore He said of it, 'Wheresoever this gospel shall be preached, this shall be spoken of for a memorial of her.'

2. Has not this offering of hers proved more beneficial to the world than if the money value of it (did the money exist which could measure its value?) had been given to the poor? The money might have benefited a few persons for *a short time;* contrast this with the devotion,

the generosity, the outpouring of self, the things of beauty in form, sound, or thought, which this precious ointment has called forth! Are not the poor of all nations and of all times the richer for her enthusiastic love?

II.—1. Beware of despising the forms in which others express their devotion, because they are not exactly the forms which commend themselves to you. 'She hath wrought a good work *on Me*,' said our Lord; this is the test of the worth of devotion in whatever external form it may be clothed: is it done *for Him?*

2. Learn that 'man does not live by bread alone,' that he has another nature in addition to his bodily nature which needs to be nourished. To relieve the wants of the poor is not the only way of doing good: man has imagination, sentiments, aspirations; it is through the right cultivation of these that he may be led to the true end of life, which is devotion to the One perfectly Good and True.

XI.

The Lowly King.

St. Matt. xxi. 1–5.

I.—1. It is evident that our Lord intended this entry into Jerusalem to be a public and formal act. He knew that the crisis of His human life had come, that His enemies had already determined upon His death. There was no danger therefore lest such a demonstration should excite a rebellion against the Roman power, as it might have done had it taken place a year earlier. The rulers of the Jews were well aware that He was no such Messiah as they desired. There was no fear now that His claims would be misinterpreted.

2. Therefore in order that He may let all men know that He does claim to be the Messiah and the King, He for once departs from His usual shrinking from publicity, and in fulfilment of prophecy, thus asserts His position. It is for this reason that He here speaks in terms of command, describing Himself as 'the Lord.' This is the only occasion on which He uses this title directly of Himself.

3. At the same time notice how in the manner of His entering the city He is careful to repu*diate all earthly* notions of lordship and sove-

reignty. He comes 'meek,' sitting, not upon a horse, the emblem of power, but upon an ass, the representative of meekness and patience. (Comp. Zech. ix. 9, with 10.)

II.—1. 'Behold Thy King cometh, meek.' It is thus that He comes, not only to His own city, but to every human soul which He claims for Himself. He does not come to us with pomp and power, making His presence known by any visible display, but *meek*. In the simple sacraments of the Church, in the whispers of conscience, in the hour of sorrow or of pain, in the example of one of His humble ones, in the commonest circumstances of life, JESUS may be hidden. Nothing is too lowly for Him.

2. But in whatever humble form He clothes Himself we feel that He is indeed a King, One Who has a claim upon our allegiance, One Who must be obeyed. His kingdom is not of this world, resting upon the forces in which this world trusts, but within us.

3. 'Thy King comes meek.' How often has He come so meekly that we have felt half disposed not to recognise Him! Yet we remember 'Blessed are the meek, for they shall inherit the earth.' There is a divine strength in meekness which we cannot, if we would, resist.

XII.

No Triumph is of Value except that which comes through the Cross.

ST. MATT. xxi. 6–11.

I.—For once JESUS appears to be triumphing. The popular feeling is on His side in spite of the opposition of the Jewish leaders. The multitude seem to be ready to accept Him as the Messiah. Yet there is but little of triumph evident in His own bearing. While all around Him are shouting with enthusiasm, He weeps. He could see how superficial was their acceptance of Him. His penetrating gaze could pierce through all the mixed motives which swelled the common cry of Hosanna. He could see that many were led by curiosity, many by a surface-stirring of their feelings, many by the current of nervous sympathy which is ever aroused by an excited multitude. He knew also that even those few in that crowd who really loved Him and believed in Him, would fall off from Him when the time of trial came. All this enthu*siasm would* last only as long as He appeared

to be triumphing, it would not follow Him to the Cross. As He approached *that*, all (even the beloved disciples) would forsake Him and flee. He knew that His only triumph, worthy of the name, must come through the Cross, and that He could win no souls to Himself unless they were prepared to go with Him to that Cross and to endure it for His sake.

II.—1. It is no proof that because a particular form of religion is popular, it is therefore winning souls to JESUS. Churches may be crowded, services attractive and hearty, enthusiasm great, but there is no JESUS if there is no Cross.

2. It is easy for a person to be very much devoted to all the externals of worship, and yet not to have any true devotion to the inner Spirit of CHRIST, which is the spirit of obedience unto death, even the death of the Cross.

XIII.

The things which belong to our Peace.

ST. LUKE, xix. 41–44.

I.—1. JESUS Who wept silently at the grave of Lazarus, now weeps aloud as He comes in sight of the city of Jerusalem. He loved that city as every true Jew must have loved it. He wept over the terrible fate which was to overtake it. He wept because of the moral blindness of its people who knew not the things which belonged to their peace. They had been seeking for peace by the very means which would turn to their destruction. They had expected to find peace through self-assertion, religious bigotry, selfish arrogance. It was just these which were hurrying them on to that final madness of rebellion which ended in their utter overthrow.

2. If Jerusalem, the City of Peace, had but recognised Him as the Prince of Peace! If its people had but learned that the kingdom of GOD was within them! that blessedness is for the poor in spirit, the peacemakers, the pure in *heart, the merciful!* It was too late for them *to learn this now.* Their notions of what makes

for peace were so distorted that they could not recognise the only true form of peace when it was presented to them.

II.—1. The mistake was not theirs alone. How few there are who know the things which belong to their peace! Some hope to find peace through becoming wealthy, through gaining some cherished purpose, through triumphing over a rival, through witnessing the success of some favoured cause. These ends may be gained, but peace does not come. It may be that the very qualities most developed and strengthened in the search after peace through such means are exactly those which destroy all true inward peace.

2. Peace consists in conscience at rest with GOD, in passions controlled, in contentment, in trust, in hope, in love. Such peace can only be found by taking JESUS as our King, and by entering through Him into Sonship of our FATHER Which is in Heaven.

XIV.

The Impossibility of Suppressing Faith in Jesus.

ST. LUKE, xix. 39, 40. ST. MATT. xxi. 15, 16.

I.—1. Partly out of hatred, and partly out of fear lest the disturbance should arouse the hostility of the Roman authorities, the chief priests and scribes desire JESUS to silence the cries of welcome with which, both on His entry into the city and in the Temple itself, He is received.

2. JESUS, although He is well aware that much of this enthusiasm rests on no very solid basis, yet declines to rebuke it. It is the outward expression of the homage which is undoubtedly His due, and these scribes must learn that there is a virtue in the faith of little children in comparison with which all that their erudition has taught them is worthless. 'Had they never read?' No doubt they had: but of what use is the study of the letter if the understanding heart is wanting? 'Knowledge comes, but wisdom lingers.'

II.—1. There always exists a spirit of opposition which would seek to suppress every outward expression of faith in JESUS. By the use of ridicule, or of threats, by an assumption of *prudence,* at times this spirit succeeds too well.

2. But there is a witness to Him which never can be suppressed,—the testimony of the child-like conscience. Because of this testimony, faith in JESUS is ever springing up afresh, while its enemies are flattering themselves that they have destroyed it. And it springs up to their confusion. He left His critics to finish the quotation for themselves: 'Out of the mouth of babes and sucklings hast Thou ordained strength . . . *that Thou mightest still the enemy and the avenger.*' (Ps. viii. 2.)

3. There is yet another witness to JESUS which no opposition can silence. It is that of physical nature. The increase of our knowledge of physical nature enables us to see how deep a truth is hidden in His saying, 'The stones would cry out.' Many of the stones of which the crust of our earth is composed are found by their very construction to reveal that it is a law of nature that the higher life can only be produced and sustained by the surrender of the lower life. And is not this also the law of the Cross? The more we know of physical nature the more do we find that it bears witness to Him by Whom all things were made.

4. Let us bless GOD that although an Anti-Christian spirit may be ever attempting to suppress the utterance of our faith, yet there is, in created nature, both in its lowest form and in its highest, the human soul, a voice that never ceases to cry, 'Blessed is He that cometh in the Name of the Lord.'

XV.

Fruitlessness the Result of Selfishness.

ST. MATT. xxi. 17–19.

I.—1. JESUS, led by His natural hunger, drew near to this fig-tree, the full foliage of which promised an abundance of fruit, for it is the nature of the fig to produce fruit even before it produces leaves. He is disappointed; He finds none. It could not be that it had been gathered, for the time of gathering had not come.

2. At once He, to Whom all the analogies between the worlds of nature and of grace were open secrets, sees in this tree a perfect representation of the then condition of the Jewish Church. It was a tree which had evidently been nurtured by favourable circumstances, for it appears to have been more forward than the rest, but its forwardness consisted in leaves only without fruit, in ostentation without reality, in living for itself instead of in offering life and refreshment to others. An exact picture of the Jewish Church! Specially favoured by GOD, blessed with a spiritual training far beyond other nations, and yet using its privileges for selfish ends, stubbornly refusing to fulfil the object for which those privileges were bestowed, viz., that through it all nations of the earth should be blessed.

3. In order that the disciples may learn that such a condition is a condition of death, not of life, He pronounces the fig-tree cursed. *He* does not curse it, it had already cursed itself; He merely brings its outward condition into harmony with the inward. It may be that in this, as in nearly all His miracles, He was but hastening a natural process. Not impossibly the superabundance of foliage and the absence of fruit were the symptoms of a diseased condition which must sooner or later have resulted in death.

4. The miracle would teach His disciples that the destruction of a life which is selfish and fruitless, and therefore evil, is as necessary a work of the Kingdom of GOD as the binding up of the broken-hearted or the releasing of the captive.

II.—'Let no fruit grow on thee henceforward for ever.' This is the curse which every selfish life pronounces upon itself. People sometimes complain that they can exercise no influence over others, that their children neglect to obey them, that their lives seem likely to leave no good results behind them. Let such ask themselves whether all this has not arisen from the fact that such lives have been selfish. Having failed to produce the fruit required of them, having decked themselves with leaves only, upon them has the curse come, 'Let no fruit grow on thee henceforward for ever.'

XVI.

The Second Cleansing of the Temple.

ST. MARK, xi. 15–19.

I.—1. This was not the first time that our Lord had driven out the buyers and sellers from the Temple. To cleanse His FATHER'S House was the first act of His public ministry (St. John, ii. 13). Such an action bore witness in language which could not be misunderstood, that He had come to purify and reform the living Temple, the Church of GOD.

2. Now at the end of three years He visits this Temple once again. He finds that the evil spirit which He had cast out has returned in sevenfold force, that the last state of that house is worse than the first. At His first visit He had declared that they had made the Holy Place *a house of merchandise.* He now pronounces that it has become *a den of thieves.* See how an unhallowed familiarity with sacred things deadens the conscience until it has no voice to protest against the grossest breaches of the moral law!

3. He comes, therefore, this second time, no

longer to warn but to judge. The earthly Temple which had been erected as the outward expression of the Presence of GOD, and of man's access to Him has rejected the Living Temple in Whom dwelt all the fulness of the GODHEAD bodily; it must now be rejected by Him.

II.—Every human soul is a Temple of GOD. Every human soul is created to be a House of Prayer, a home of communion with the FATHER of Spirits. To each human soul JESUS, the True Presence of GOD, comes that He may purify it. He finds in each soul thoughts, tendencies, cravings, which are not of GOD, but of the fallen human nature. He bids us, Take these things hence; what have they in common with GOD's dwelling-place? Unless these are cast out they must in the end pollute the soul which harbours them, so that that which was at the first allowed to become a home for unhallowed imaginations, becomes at last a den of thieves: that which should have been a house of prayer becomes a haunt of evil spirits. And to a soul thus polluted, JESUS must come a second time to judge and to condemn.

XVII.

Faith and Love the Wings of Prayer.

ST. MARK, xi. 20-26.

I.—1. The wonder expressed by the disciples at the rapid withering of the fig-tree seems to have implied a certain want of faith in their Lord. Had he not shown His power in many ways more marvellous than this? If they only had true faith they would be able themselves to do such works, and works much more wonderful. The work which lay before them, the work of facing and converting a heathen world, was to all human appearance a far more hopeless task than the withering a fig-tree, or than even the overthrowing of a mountain. And hopeless in reality would the task be if they had not entire faith in Him Who would work in them and through them. Only in faithful prayer could they realise their strength.

2. And not only will they need faith, they must add to their faith love. Faith and Love are the wings of prayer. Probably JESUS feared lest they should misunderstand His action of withering the fig-tree, and fancy that it was an act of vindictiveness instead of being merely a typical warning. He feared lest they should be [redacted]*empted to think* that the all-powerful weapon

of prayer might be used to bring down destruction upon those who opposed them. Therefore He reminds them that all true prayer offered to the GOD of Love must be offered in the Spirit of Love.

II.—1. Consider what is here made known to us concerning the Power of Prayer. We lose much of the benefit of our prayers because we do not really believe that all prayer offered in faith must be answered. True faith leaves the nature of the answer to GOD, because it believes more in Him than in itself. True faith would never look for a *literal* fulfilment of this promise of JESUS, for it knows that such physical marvels are not in harmony with the FATHER'S will, and to look for such is to doubt Him.

2. If prayer is offered in Faith, it must also be offered in Love. For prayer only reaches the Throne of GOD in as far as it is offered by us as members of CHRIST in union with Him and with the intercession which He ever maketh for us. Only when it is in faith and love can it be in union with Him, Who is Faithful, Loving, and True. If our prayers are not offered in this spirit, they are of the earth earthy, they can never rise above the earth.

3. It was in the might of prayer, upheld by faith and love, that the apostles went forth to remove mountains. What is there to limit its power now if it is wielded as they wielded it?

XVIII.

The Death of the one Perfect Son the Life of the Human Race.

ST. JOHN, xii. 20–24.

I.—1. The few occasions on which persons of Gentile origin showed an interest in our Lord excited in Him the deepest emotions. (See the stories of the Woman of Samaria and of the Canaanitish Woman.) He knew that the time had not yet come for their conversion, but He could see in these individual instances the germ of that great Catholic gathering of the nations which His soul desired.

2. This anxiety on the part of certain Greeks to see Him stirs in Him a fresh longing for the Cross which was now but a few days off, for He knows that it is only when He has passed through the Cross that His life can be shed abroad. In His pre-crucifixion life He was a grain of wheat abiding alone, with no power of reproduction. True that He had already gathered round Him a small group of disciples, *but at present* they were *near* Him but not *of*

Him, He was *with* them but not *in* them. When He had passed through the Cross He would be like the same grain of wheat which in dying reproduces itself a hundred-fold. His Spirit would then pass into His disciples, they would begin to live His life. Contrast the apostles in the *Gospels* with the same apostles as pictured in the Book of the *Acts*.

II.—1. Contemplate how this Corn of wheat which fell into the ground and died is still germinating after the lapse of so many centuries. Every life that is lived in the SPIRIT of CHRIST, every action that is done in Him, spring from His ever-fruitful Cross. Fulfilled is the prophecy 'He shall see His seed, He shall prolong His days.' His days are prolonged wherever His life is re-produced in His members.

2. Contemplate also how all that is good in ourselves, every pure wish, every unselfish action, is not of us but of the CHRIST Who liveth in us.

XIX.

The Philosophy of Life as taught by Jesus.

St. John, xii. 25, 26.

I.—1. Thrice before had Jesus spoken this same truth: (1) When He first sent out His disciples, St. Matt. x. 39; (2) When He first announced to them His Cross, St. Matt. xvi. 25; (3) When He foretold the terrors of His judgment, St. Luke, xvii. 33. These Greeks, more than all others, had need to learn it, for the Cross was to them foolishness (1 Cor. i. 23), their idea of life was to enjoy it.

2. This saying may be designated Christ's philosophy of life, His teaching as to the true method of securing the end for which we exist. The words are in contradiction to our natural selfish instincts which bid us live to satisfy our own desires. But they are in harmony with our deeper experience and our truer nature, which teach us that happiness does not come through self-seeking but through living for others. Those who live to please themselves never are pleasing to themselves; those who forget themselves in seeking to bless others find thereby the truest blessing for themselves.

3. Our Lord would here teach us that just *as His larger life* came through the Cross, just

as before the Cross He was a corn of wheat abiding alone, but when He had passed through the Cross He found His life repeated in His followers, in like manner we shall find a wider and truer life if we give up ourselves for others' sake. His experience must be ours also; 'If any man *serve* Me, let him *follow* Me;' 'Where I am, there shall also My servant be.'

II.—1. Contemplate this revelation of the real secret of blessedness. Our hearts bear witness that it is profoundly true. Have not our moments of keenest happiness been those in which we have been conscious of having done what is right at some cost to ourselves, or those in which we have given up our own wills to please others? Is the joy which comes from gaining a pleasure for ourselves to be compared with the joy which springs from giving pleasure to others? Is not this the truest foretaste of the joy of heaven? Surely 'the joy of our Lord' into which we are to enter (St. Matt. xxv. 21) can be none other than the joy of self-sacrifice. He, 'for the joy that was set before Him, endured the Cross.'

2. No one need be like the corn of wheat which abideth alone; every one can find those whom he may bless, and in whose happiness he will find his own.

XX.

The Cross of the Son the Glory of the Father.

ST. JOHN, xii. 27-30.

I.—1. Our Lord seems to be here holding a debate within Himself, the issue of which is ratified by a voice from heaven. Shall He seek to be saved from the Cross? Nay: had He not come into the world that He might do the will of the FATHER, that will which was leading Him to the Cross? His one desire is that the FATHER'S Name should be glorified. And there comes a voice answering Him that already has that Name been glorified in the thus far completed ministry of His life, and still again would it be glorified in the wider ministry of the Cross.

2. That voice had come to Him before when in His Baptism He had consecrated Himself to this ministry, and once again when at His Transfiguration He had renounced all glory save that of the Cross. Now that the Cross is almost upon Him it comes for the third time.

3. His own prayer and His FATHER'S answer *are spoken in* an audible voice, so that the

disciples may learn that the Cross which was to them a stumbling-block was to redound to the glory of the FATHER.

4. The incident is a prelude to Gethsemane. He prays here 'Hallowed be Thy Name;' in the intenser struggle which was to follow He goes on to 'Thy will be done.' In both He prays, 'Give us this day our daily bread;' for is it not His meat to do the will of Him Who sent Him?

II.—1. Contemplate how the Cross of JESUS is the glory of the FATHER. It is the glory of His love. May we not call the Cross of the SON the Cross of the FATHER also? In giving up the SON was He not giving up Himself?

2. 'He that spared not His own SON, but delivered Him up for us all, how shall He not with Him also freely give us all things?'—(Rom. viii. 32.)

XXI.

The Cross the Throne of Jesus.

St. John, xii. 31–33.

I.—1. Jesus is here absorbed in the ecstasy of the Cross. He sees in it not only the manifestation of the Father's love, but also the source of the most momentous change in the condition of men.

2. Hitherto the world hath been guided by a spirit which lived for the visible instead of for the invisible, and which exalted self above the will of God. This evil spirit was to reveal itself in its full development in the crucifixion of the one perfect Son. This extreme carrying out of the false principle which had hitherto ruled mankind would prove its own condemnation; and at the same time the obedience of the perfect Son even to the death of the Cross would exalt Him to be a Prince and a Saviour in place of the old prince of this world who is thereby cast out. The crucified Son will draw all men to Him, and the world will thus pass *under a new* head.

II.—1. Contemplate how in the Cross of JESUS that old conflict is brought to an issue; 'It shall bruise thy head, and thou shalt bruise his heel.' Men had been deceived by the thought that they could satisfy themselves with the external things which this present life affords; through this error they had put themselves under a false lord whom they had exalted to be 'prince of this world.' JESUS, through living above these external things, and through being led only by the will of the FATHER, and becoming obedient unto death, conquers the prince of this world, and is therefore highly exalted and given a Name which is above every name.

2. As each human soul is drawn to the Cross of JESUS and finds in it the perfect ideal of human life and the perfect manifestation of Divine love, by accepting that cross he passes out of the dominion of the evil lord, and finds his true Lord and Master even JESUS Who is in Him by His SPIRIT.

XXII.

The Guilt of Moral Blindness.

ST. JOHN, xii. 34-36.

I.—1. What a measureless gulf there appears to be between the mind of CHRIST and the minds of these Jews! While He is absorbed in the ecstasy of the cross they are occupied with trivial criticisms from what they have heard in the law! Their notions of a Messiah had nothing in common with the idea of a Son of Man who was to be lifted up. And yet we know that it is just because He is the Son of Man, and *is* lifted up, that He is the Messiah, the Anointed of GOD, and that He doth abide for ever.

2. JESUS does not argue with them. He perceives that in their case it is not their reasoning, but their conscience, that is at fault. He is the Light of the world; light is self-revealing. If the light within them had not been darkened they must have recognised Him. He can now do no more than solemnly warn them that *darkness was fast* coming when the true Light

would shine upon them no more. Let them believe in the Light, for only so could they become children of the Light.

II.—1. When unbelief comes (as it often does come) from a guilty conscience, it is without excuse. The attempt to persuade one's self that it rests upon intellectual difficulties, is a mockery. Every one who listens to the teaching of JESUS with an unprejudiced mind and an unsullied heart, must acknowledge that He is indeed a Teacher come from GOD, that in Him is Life, and that the Life is the Light of men.

2. Let those who are thus deceiving themselves tremble lest the darkness come upon them, lest JESUS 'depart and hide Himself from them.'

XXIII.

Truth honoured by the Opposition of the Wicked.

ST. JOHN, xii. 37–43.

I.—1. This is St. John's summary of the result of our Lord's mission to the Jews, and of the causes which led them to reject Him.

It had long ago been foreseen that they would reject Him. Even in the days of the prophet Isaiah the spiritual blindness which prevented their recognition of spiritual truth had already come upon them, and, having of themselves chosen this condition, the only witness which they could now bear to JESUS was to reject Him; for is not the hatred which evil bears towards good one of the truest testimonies to its worth? Having blinded themselves to the spiritual nature of the Messiah, was it not better that they should not accept Him in any sense?

2. To Isaiah the Eternal SON had manifested Himself in His glory, and those who were like-minded with him could see that same glory *in the Person* of JESUS of Nazareth, for the

glory of GOD does not consist in outward magnificence, but in that which is inward and spiritual. To the carnal mind this glory of His was as nothing, to such He had no form or comeliness; while to those who had eyes to see He was altogether lovely, fairer than the children of men.

3. The root of this unbelief was that 'they loved the praise of men more than the praise of GOD;' they lived in and for the outward and visible rather than in and for the inward and spiritual.

II.—1. This is the source of all spiritual blindness; the resting satisfied with the things which are seen, which are temporal, instead of recognising that there is no reality save in the things which are unseen, which are eternal.

2. But inasmuch as GOD maketh all things subservient to His will, they who reject Him cannot injure Him, they are only injuring themselves, and are promoting the greatness of Him Whom they reject, by witnessing that all that is evil and vain is in opposition to Him.

XXIV.

The Word of God a Saviour and a Judge.

St. John, xii. 44–50.

I.—1. Jesus Himself sums up in solemn form the terrible judgment which must come upon those who wilfully reject Him. It is not merely Him Whom they are rejecting, it is God in Him. He is the manifestation of God to man, Who has come to lead men out of darkness into the light. Just because He had come to save rather than to judge, by rejecting Him they were thereby condemning themselves. For the judgment which He pronounces is no arbitrary sentence; the truth which He has proclaimed among men will be their Judge; it will condemn, it will execute its decrees; for that truth has no human origin, it is from the source of Truth, the Eternal Father; it is in itself Eternal Life, and it is Eternal Judgment to those who reject it. There will be no need for the Judge to say, 'Bind them hand and foot, and cast them into outer darkness;' they *will have already* bound themselves by the

chain of their sins; they will already be in the outer darkness, which they have chosen in preference to the light.

II.—1. Consider how in rejecting Him Who saves we are of necessity pronouncing our own condemnation; for what is there that can save if He is rejected? 'This is the condemnation, that Light is come into the world, and men loved darkness rather than Light, because their deeds were evil.'

2. Reflect that the words of JESUS, upon which we meditate, are the words of the FATHER, Which sent Him. They are in us for judgment, if they are not in us for spirit and for life.

XXV.

The Weakness which follows upon Neglect of Duty.

ST. MATT. xxi. 23–27.

I.—1. This, the last visit of our Lord to the Temple, is made the occasion of a series of attacks upon Him by those who have set their hearts upon His destruction. Each of these attacks turns to their own confusion. Unreality is ever put to confusion when it combats reality.

2. This first question, 'By what authority doest Thou these things?' was a justifiable one in its form. As the guardians of religion it was the duty of the priests to test the claims of those who came exercising the office of a teacher.

3. But although the question was justifiable in form, JESUS perceives that it is put from an evil motive, viz. for the purpose of drawing some statement from Him which might be twisted into a charge against Him. He, therefore, declines to answer them, by showing that

they had abdicated their right to question Him, since they had shrunk from giving any decision as to the claims of John the Baptist through fear of the consequences which would follow.

II.—1. To shrink from the duties which the office to which we have been called by GOD lays upon us, because we fear that the performance of them will involve us in difficulties which we desire to avoid, is to deprive ourselves of the power of performing those duties in the future.

2. Especially to shrink from facing a question which touches our spiritual life, which we yet feel that we ought to face, because we dread the consequences which the answer will bring with it, is to forfeit our right of questioning JESUS and of advancing in the knowledge of Him.

XXVI.

An external Profession of Religion may harden the Soul to God's Call.

ST. MATT. xxi. 28–32.

I.—1. JESUS here presses home the confessed inability of the priests and elders to decide as to the claims of John the Baptist, to their confusion. These religious teachers are exactly typified by the son who said, 'I go, sir.' Their profession was a continual saying, 'I go.' The publicans and sinners whose lives were evil, who openly refused to conform to religion, were in like manner ever saying, 'I will not.'

2. But when John the Baptist came, carrying out in stern reality the law of righteousness which these priests professed to administer, it was the publicans who repented and submitted themselves to his baptism. The Scribes and Pharisees, resting in their profession 'I go, sir,' went not. Even the sight of the effect of the message upon the hearts of sinners did not lead them to repentance. They only hardened themselves *the more* against it.

II.—1. How often is it that when the voice of GOD comes calling men to a more real life in Him, those who have been foremost in an external profession of religion are just those who reject it, while those who have at any rate been real in their refusal to make any profession accept the call in its reality, and, accepting it, enter the Kingdom! No spiritual condition is so hard as that which seeks to satisfy itself with a multitude of external ordinances. What numbers of regular church-going people are in this condition! Their outward profession is for ever saying, 'I go, sir;' but when there comes a John the Baptist, crying, 'Repent,' the demand upon them is too real, they cannot see what more is required of them than that which they have already done. Truly the publicans and sinners go into the Kingdom before such!

2. Yet the Kingdom is not closed for them if they will but learn that it is self and not GOD in whom they have been trusting.

XXVII.

The Rejection of the Son is the Rejection of Ourselves.

ST. MATT. xxi. 33–41.

I.—1. This parable is an allegory of the actual history of the people of Israel since they had been planted in the land of promise. GOD's vineyard is His kingdom, His rule in the hearts of men. Israel was chosen to cultivate that kingdom in order that it might bring forth the fruits of holiness. But those whom GOD sent to seek those fruits were rejected and despised. The favoured nation had thought to make the kingdom their own, forgetting that it was only theirs just as far as they were GOD's.

2. At the last GOD in His generosity sends to them His SON: 'They will reverence my SON.' But the spirit of selfishness had so far taken possession of them, that reverence can find no place. They will kill the Son so that they might make the inheritance their own. Blind people! if 'this is the Heir,' it was only *by entering* into fellowship with Him that the *inheritance could* be theirs! What fate can be

theirs save destruction, so that the vineyard may be given to those who would bring forth the fruits thereof?

II.—1. Contemplate how this history of Israel repeats itself in many a human soul. Each human soul is a kingdom of GOD. He reigns in us that in us He may bring forth fruit. But our old selfish nature desires to reign without Him. It longs to be its own kingdom instead of His. To each one of us He sends His SON. He will trust us thus far. CHRIST is in every heart seeking His own. Yet many knowing that 'This is the Heir,' say to themselves, 'Come let us kill Him that the inheritance may be ours;' 'Let us destroy the SON of GOD within us, and let us be our own masters!' O miserable blindness! They are destroying the only way by which the inheritance might be theirs! If they would but yield themselves to His light burden and His easy yoke, they, too, would be 'heirs of GOD, joint-heirs with CHRIST.'

2. That old selfish nature which has chosen to exalt itself against the CHRIST must be destroyed, 'for He must reign till He hath put all enemies under His feet.'

XXVIII.

The Christ rejected of Men must chastise Men.

ST. MATT. xxi. 42-46.

I.—1. Our Lord here introduces another figure to supplement the foregoing parable. No one analogy from human life can present all sides of GOD'S truth. If the parable of the husbandmen had stood alone, it might have created the impression that the Heir Whom they had killed was dead indeed. He therefore quotes this Psalm to show how that He who was rejected by men would be exalted to the highest honour, and that when thus exalted He must bring a terrible chastisement upon those who still refused to acknowledge Him.

2. The Jewish people, as a body, were the builders. Such was their calling: yet in their folly they had rejected the Stone intended for the head of the corner, and were now stumbling upon it and throwing themselves against it. In doing so they were being broken. The Gospel history is just the history of this. But

He upon Whom they were now falling would be exalted and be given a Name above every name. What could come upon those who then resisted Him, save that they should be ground to powder?

II.—1. They who reject JESUS because they are unable to believe in Him, shall be broken. And is it not best for them that they should be broken?

2. They who reject Him even when they know that He is exalted to be both Prince and Saviour, must be ground to powder. And is it not best for them that they should be ground to powder? The process must be one of bitter shame and agony, but it is better to be thus ground to powder than that they should continue to exalt themselves against Him.

3. If we perceive that He is speaking this parable against *us*, shall we seek to lay hands upon Him to suppress Him? Or shall we not rather take Him for a prophet? (ver. 46.)

XXIX.

Man's Treatment of God's Invitation.

St. Matt. xxii. 1–14.

I.—1. This parable is an expansion (under a different figure) of the incident of the sending of the King's Son, in the parable of the wicked husbandmen. Our Lord shows here that this coming of the King's Son was not only that He might seek the fruits of the past, but that He might celebrate a spiritual marriage between Himself and His elect.

2. This truth has been taught in a former parable (St. Luke, xiv. 16). He now proceeds to declare the chastisement which must come upon those who reject the invitation to this marriage, and also upon those who accept it in a wrong, self-satisfied spirit.

3. Our Lord rebukes those who were the bidden guests (the Jews, the elect nation), for refusing to take part in this great union between God and man. All who thus neglect the call must be left out from the marriage, and their place must be filled by others.

4. But let those others remember that the mere external acceptance of the invitation will not suffice if it is accepted under the idea that *they can make* themselves fit partakers of it;

:hey can only become this by clothing themselves with that new nature which is bestowed upon all who will accept it, by the Bridegroom Himself.

II. The points for contemplation are these :—

1. *All* are invited to enter the Kingdom of Heaven, which is the spiritual union between GOD and man wrought by GOD being made man and dwelling in man. Whether they are worthy of it or not does not depend upon anything in themselves (both *bad* and good were called, ver. 10), but upon their acceptance or rejection of the invitation. This is man's part, to accept or to reject. Those who reject it are those who 'judge themselves unworthy of everlasting life.' (Acts, xiii. 46.)

2. Those who accept it must learn that they are not true subjects of that Kingdom if they think that they became so by merely effecting an improvement in their old evil nature. Such they can only be when they have been taught 'that in themselves (that is, in their flesh) dwelleth no good thing,' but that they must be entirely re-created by the indwelling of CHRIST within them.

3. To recognise this is to accept the invitation, and to be worthy of it; for it is to recognise that the Kingdom into which we are called is the spiritual marriage of CHRIST with His people; and is not that, 'CHRIST in us the hope of glory?'

XXX.

Rightful Obedience to the Laws of God and Man.

ST. MATT. xxii. 15-22.

I. The enemies of JESUS, although baffled in their first attack, make a fresh attempt by uniting against Him two parties who were generally hostile to each other. Feigning themselves just men (*i. e.* affecting a scruple of conscience), they put to Him a question which was a standing dispute between themselves. They felt confident that in whichever way He answered it He must offend either the Roman authorities or the popular Jewish feeling. He sees through their duplicity. He does not refuse to answer the question. He shows them that from the fact that they were using money bearing the image of Cæsar, they had so far accepted his authority. But He is not content with a bare solution to a temporary dispute. He goes down to first principles, so that all such questions may find an answer: 'Render to Cæsar the things which are Cæsar's, and to GOD the things that be GOD'S.'

II.—1. The kingdoms of the world are *external king*doms, ruling us by laws and cus-

toms; we are to obey them as being part of the Divine government of the world, 'not only for wrath, but also for conscience sake.' JESUS here stamps them with His authority.

2. GOD'S Kingdom is a kingdom within us, ruling us by the presence of His SPIRIT in our hearts.

3. Inasmuch as all kingdoms of the world are liable to err, it is possible that the time may come when their laws seem to us to contradict the teaching of GOD within us. When such is the case it is our duty to obey the law of the SPIRIT within; but when this conflict occurs, we are bound to take all pains to find out whether it is GOD'S law within us which we are obeying, or merely the promptings of a misdirected conscience.

III. Like all Christian law this is a positive, not a negative, commandment. If each man were to render to Cæsar and to GOD the things which belong to each, the conflict between the two laws could never occur. The Pharisees were throwing the CHRIST to Cæsar while they affected great scruples about such a trifle as paying tribute. It is a mockery for those who are not rendering to GOD the things which are GOD'S (*i. e.* themselves, all that they are and all that they possess), to profess great zeal lest the kingdoms of the world should encroach upon the Kingdom of CHRIST. Let them see that such is not taking place in themselves.

XXXI.

True and False Notions of the Resurrection Life.

ST. LUKE, xx. 27–36.

I.—1. The Pharisees having been silenced, the Sadducees, whose creed was a practical denial of all spiritual existence, now come to our Lord and seek to place Him in a dilemma from which He would be unable to extricate Himself.

2. He does not treat these Sadducees so severely as He had done the Pharisees. They erred from ignorance, 'not knowing the Scriptures or the power of GOD;' this was not to Him a sign of such deep spiritual degradation as was the unblushing hypocrisy of the Pharisees. He knew that Phariseeism breeds Sadduceeism, that it is the inconsistent lives of those who profess to be very religious which drive many into unbelief.

3. The form in which they clothe their difficulty seems to show that much of their scepticism resulted from the carnal ideas which those who professed to believe in a future life had formed about it. If the future life is a mere *repetition of the* present, under the same carnal

conditions, their difficulty was a well-founded one. Our Lord must remove their misconceptions before He could give them any more spiritual instruction on the subject. Their notion of marriage implies that it is merely a carnal union; He shows that if it is *only* that, it can have no place in the future life. In that life man is in a spiritual condition, and therefore only spiritual relationships can there exist. The conditions of our present life, *in as far as they are merely carnal*—birth, marriage, death—will have no place in the future life; for they who are the children of the resurrection are, in a new and immediate sense, the children of GOD.

II.—1. Just as far as we are children of the resurrection (*i. e.* of the risen life), so far are we the children of GOD: just as far as we are the children of GOD, so far are we the children of the resurrection here and hereafter.

2. Just as far as we make human relationships—husband and wife, parent and child, brother and sister—*spiritual* relationships, *i. e.* union of spirit with spirit through the indwelling Divine SPIRIT, so far shall we find that they are *eternal*, for they are not resting upon the accidents of time or place, but upon the reality of the life which is in CHRIST.

XXXII.

Faith in God our Hope of the Resurrection.

St. Matt. xxii. 29-33. St. Luke, xx. 38.

I.—1. In this case again our Lord is not content with merely solving a temporary difficulty; He goes on to place the reality of the life beyond the grave upon a testimony which is indisputable.

2. He had pointed out to the Sadducees that their error arose from (1) ignorance of the Scriptures, and (2) want of spiritual experience, 'not knowing the power of God.'

3. Note that the passage of Scripture which He quotes does not by any means teach the doctrine of the resurrection upon the surface of the text. Scripture is not a collection of proofs of doctrine or of articles of faith, but it is full of deep spiritual truth which those only who know the power of God, and are filled with His Spirit, are able to understand.

4. Those who had attained to a personal experience of Him would gather that if He thus called Himself the God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, four hundred years after their departure from this earth, they must still be *living unto Him.* Would He seek to win the

confidence of His servant Moses, by claiming for Himself to be no more than the GOD of creatures whose life was but a span?

II.—1. It is through the Scriptures, interpreted by our spiritual knowledge of what GOD is (and He is Love), that we are convinced of the resurrection of the dead.

2. The Scriptures tell us nothing about the *conditions* of the future life. He Who inspired them knew how prone we are to dwell more upon the outward than upon the inward, forgetting that the outward must be the outcome of the inward. Is not this silence intended to throw us back upon faith in the power of GOD? If we knew the conditions of the future life as we know the conditions of this life, should we not lose one great motive for trusting in GOD? The faith which our ignorance of what lies beyond the grave calls out from us, is a far better preparation for our entrance upon that future than the knowledge of its conditions could be. We trust too much to ourselves in arranging for our own future in this life. Thank GOD for removing from us the temptation to trust to ourselves to arrange for the next life also. 'He is not the GOD of the dead, but of the living.' '*All* live unto Him.' Enough!

XXXIII.

Love the Fulfilling of the Law.

St. Mark, xii. 28–31.

I.—1. This question does not appear to have been put with any evil motive, but it proceeded from one who had courage to separate himself from his fellows, and faith to look to our Lord to help him to solve a difficult problem.

2. His question shows that he had not yet grasped the true idea of God's kingdom, but that he was searching for some one commandment, by the keeping of which he would be doing his best to satisfy his conscience.

3. Our Lord's answer goes to the root of the matter. It is no one commandment that He puts in the foreground, but a living principle, the principle of love. This was no new truth; it had already been taught in the Old Testament, but it had become obscured by Pharisaic traditions, which discussed with elaborate learning the relative value of the different injunctions of the law.

II.—1. If we love God and man, we need not trouble about any other commandment. We *must* do our duty to God if we really love *Him*. *If we love* our neighbour, we *can* work

no ill to him; 'therefore love is the fulfilling of the law.'

2. Our Lord joins love to GOD and our neighbour into one great law of love. They had been separate precepts in the Old Testament. (Deut. vi. 5. Lev. xix. 18.) He shows that they are essentially one. We cannot love GOD without loving our neighbour (who is all mankind) also. (See 1 John, iv. 20, 21.) We cannot love our neighbour without loving GOD as our Father, and men as our brethren in Him. (See 1 John, iv. 7.)

3. How can we be filled with this love of GOD and our neighbour? Only by being filled with the SPIRIT of GOD, Who is Love. Recognise that the SPIRIT of GOD, Which is the SPIRIT of JESUS, Whose human life was one great manifestation of intense love towards GOD and man, is in us, and we too shall be filled with that love which is the fulfilling of the law.

4. But lest we should mistake a mere ecstatic feeling of devotion for the true love of GOD, He has given us two practical tests by which we may examine ourselves:—

'We know that we have passed from death unto life, because we love the brethren.' (1 John, iii. 14.)

'This is the love of GOD, that we keep His commandments.' (1 John, v. 3.)

XXXIV.

The Word of God Working Inwardly and Outwardly.

ST. MARK, xii. 32-34.

I.—1. How very near was the kingdom of GOD even to these Scribes and Pharisees, if they had but known it! Here is one of their number standing at the very door! He has but to recognise that the WORD of GOD Which was speaking within him, is the same WORD of GOD Who was standing clothed in human flesh before his eyes; and lo! he is in the kingdom, for the kingdom is in him!

2. JESUS recognises the genuineness of his expression; he had grasped the true principle of obedience, which is love: he had anticipated the apostolic teaching, 'To do good and to distribute forget not, for with *such* sacrifices GOD is well pleased.' (Heb. xiii. 16.) JESUS will speak the encouraging word, 'Thou art not far from the kingdom of GOD.'

3. Yet He will not hurry him on. He can *trust the* WORD which was speaking within him

that it will not leave him until it has won him.

II.—1. Learn that the WORD of GOD is in every man. Some know that it is He Who is speaking to them, and yet they oppose Him and crucify Him. Many hear Him speaking and know not whose voice it is. It is for the Church (*i. e.* those in whose hearts CHRIST is reigning) to lead such to perceive that the WORD within them is the same WORD Who was made man for us and our salvation. The Church has to be to them what Eli was to Samuel, to reveal to them that it is the LORD Who is calling them, that they are not far from the kingdom of GOD.

2. But let those who would thus bring others under the influence of their rightful King, learn to be patient as JESUS was. We cannot form CHRIST in others, we can only help them to recognise that He is there. Much harm is done by seeking to hurry on souls faster than the WORD of GOD within is leading them. Trust Him to do His own work.

XXXV.

Jesus Christ, His only Son, our Lord.

ST. MATT. xxii. 41-46.

I.—1. JESUS in His turn now puts a question to His opponents, not in the spirit which actuated them, for the purpose of creating a difficulty, but in order that He might sow the seed of eternal life in their hearts; for the seed of eternal life is contained in the true answer to the question, 'What think ye of CHRIST? Whose Son is He?'

2. The idea of the Christ which was then prevalent among the leaders of the Jews was that he would be a descendant of David, who would restore all the glories of his ancestor's kingdom. But David calls Him 'Lord.' He must, therefore, be something much greater than David, more therefore than merely his son. Whose son therefore can He be, but, in a high and special sense, the SON of GOD? It was at this title the Jews stumbled (St. John, v. 18; St. Luke, xxii. 70, 71), and yet it was the recognition of this truth which our Lord longed to see in His followers. (St. Matt. xvi. 16, 17.)

II. '*I believe* in JESUS CHRIST His only *SON our LORD.*' This is not merely a dogma

to be believed just because the Church teaches it. When once it is grasped, it will be found to be the only living reality.

See what depths of spiritual truth, what heights of spiritual life, are contained in this article of our faith.

1. 'I believe that JESUS CHRIST is the SON of GOD;' I therefore learn that His life upon earth was a life of perfect Sonship, and as I dwell upon that life I learn what Sonship of the FATHER means.

2. 'I believe that JESUS CHRIST is our LORD' —the Lord of David and of all men. I can only truly say this by the HOLY SPIRIT Who is in me (1 Cor. xii. 3); when I say it, and recognise that He is indeed my rightful Lord and King, and that His kingdom is within me, then I have but to submit myself to His will, and put myself altogether into His hands, and knowing that He Who is thus my Lord is at the same time the SON of GOD, I know that I (*i. e.* He in me) can overcome the world. (1 John, v. 5.)

3. Believing thus, GOD dwelleth in me and I in Him (1 John, iv. 15). For He that is in me is the SON of GOD, and having Him, I have life (1 John, v. 12). Having Him, I too am a child of GOD.

'Praise the LORD, O my soul, and all that is within me praise His Holy Name.'

XXXVI.

How False Principles are to be Met.

ST. MATT. xxiii. 1–7.

I.—1. JESUS brings these questionings to a conclusion by a solemn denunciation of the Pharisees and their principles. He convicts them of two leading faults: (1) that they were severe to others, while they were indulgent to themselves; (2) that they were content with *that which appears to be*, instead of seeking for *that which really is*.

2. At the same time He does not urge His followers to renounce their allegiance to their constituted leaders; on the contrary, He bids them obey them as long as they are in authority; but He sows principles which in their silent working must soon uproot all that is based upon an unsound foundation.

II. We see here His method of attacking a system or an institution which had become harmful. He does not seek to overthrow it by any violent suppression of its external organization. *He knows* that all outward manifestations

proceed from an inward spirit; they can only be destroyed by destroying the spirit which produces them. Neither does He seek to uproot what is false by merely negative teaching, showing that it is false without supplying anything to fill its place. He knows that it is only by sowing the real and the true that the unreal and the untrue can be cast out.

III.—1. In opposing any system which appears to be false and harmful, it is of no use to attempt to suppress its outward manifestations; as long as the spirit which animates it continues, it will show itself in new manifestations if it is deprived of the old. It is this animating spirit which must be attacked.

2. The false cannot be driven out by mere opposition. Man's spirit cannot be fed upon mere negations. Evil can only be cast out by the substitution of good. Teach the truth as it has been taught to you, and, if it is the truth, it may be trusted to work its own way, and to uproot the false even without appearing directly to oppose it.

XXXVII.

The One Father and the One Master.

ST. MATT. xxiii. 8–12.

I. Our Lord here exposes the way in which the Scribes and Pharisees had abused their position as teachers of religion. They had made use of it to gain spiritual influence over others, instead of to lead them to simple obedience to GOD. They had exalted themselves into authoritative guides and spiritual dictators.

II.—1. These faults of the Pharisees are faults of human nature, which are ever showing themselves under new forms.

2. We must not narrow our Lord's words as if they forbade us to apply the *names* 'father,' or 'master,' to man. Such would be falling into the very mistake which He condemns, confounding *names* with *realities*. It is the regarding men as fathers or teachers in the sense in which GOD is our FATHER, and CHRIST our Teacher, that is condemned.

3. There is a real danger lest we should do *this*. *Men may lead* us to GOD our FATHER,

but unless we learn to know Him for ourselves, we are trusting in men, not in Him; we are taking our faith from men, and not from Him. Men may guide us to see that CHRIST is our Teacher, and may help us to submit ourselves to Him; but if we are always seeking men to direct us what to do and what to believe, we are ignoring Him Who is within us by His SPIRIT.

4. It is a twofold danger: 'Call no man father;' 'Be not ye called master.' There is a danger lest we should regard some man, or body of men, as the final authority in matters of faith; and there is a corresponding danger lest we should long so to mould other minds that they may ever look to us for guidance.

5. Those who have learned that GOD alone is their Father, and CHRIST alone their Teacher, must see that they can only truly help others by leading them to learn this also. 'HE must increase, I must decrease,' must be the motto for all workers for CHRIST. 'All ye are brethren' (not fathers or masters over one another), is the idea of the Christian community. Those who humble themselves, and hide themselves out of sight, so that CHRIST may be all in all, shall be exalted; those who exalt themselves shall be humbled.

XXXVIII.

Three Tests of Reality.

ST. MATT. xxiii. 13–15.

I. JESUS is here exposing three characteristics of Pharisaism :—

1. That it hinders those who are seeking the kingdom of GOD from finding it, because it sets itself up to be that kingdom (which it is not), and so obscures the true kingdom.

2. That it separates between religion and everyday morality, practically making them two distinct portions of life which have no connexion with each other.

3. That it seeks to make proselytes for the sake of its party, not for the sake of truth; and that therefore these proselytes are worse even than the proselytisers, for these latter must still have some knowledge of the religion of which their Pharisaism is a distortion, whereas their disciples will know the distortion only.

II. It will be found that all these symptoms *of Pharisaism* proceed from one root falsehood,

viz. that religion is something which is manufactured by the adoption of beliefs and practices outside our real selves, instead of being (what it truly is) a growth which proceeds from our having accepted the rule of the Divine SPIRIT within us.

III. We may use these three verses to test our own religion whether it is artificial or whether it is real.

1. Is it such as to attract people to the kingdom of GOD as they see it manifesting itself in us?

2. Is it a living principle which guides all the actions of our life? or is it something which only displays itself in the performance of a certain set of religious duties, or in our conversation with a certain set of friends?

3. In seeking to win others to the special form of truth which we hold, are we seeking to gain fresh converts to our opinions, or to win other souls to enter into the joy of believing in CHRIST?

XXXIX.

Real and Artificial Morality.

ST. MATT. xxiii. 16–24.

I.—1. These two censures expose another characteristic of Pharisaism. Conventional or outside religion must produce a conventional or outside morality. It is conscious of no spirit of truth within itself which will teach it to refuse the evil and choose the good, therefore it has to mark off certain practices which must be avoided as evil, and certain duties the performance of which constitutes goodness. It forgets that the good or evil of an action is not in itself, but in the spirit in which it is done.

2. This conventional morality leads those who trust to it into most unreal positions, causing them to distinguish between acts which do not essentially differ from one another, and leading them to pay exaggerated attention to minor matters, as a salve to the conscience which is too cowardly to face the great duties of life. Our Lord by no means condemns careful attention to minor matters, but it grieves Him to see how often they are considered of *the first impor*tance.

II. This spirit may still show itself in various ways:—

1. In stigmatising certain pleasures or occupations (not in themselves wrong), as especially 'worldly,' forgetting that 'to the pure all things are pure;' that worldliness is a spirit, not an act—a spirit which can as readily find its way into the most severely guarded life as into our innocent pleasures.

2. In exaggerating the importance of little outward things, which may have their proper value, but which are but dust in the balance when compared with the inner reverence of the spirit which places its whole being at GOD'S footstool.

III. There is but one true Guide to teach us what is right and what is wrong; it is the SPIRIT of GOD within us. It is only when we give ourselves into His hands that we are able to thread our way through the problems of life. We may err at times through not understanding His voice, but the more confidence we place in Him, the more we shall learn what it is to have no will but His.

XL.

The Outward and the Inward.

ST. MATT. xxiii. 25–28.

I.—1. In the previous verses our Lord had been denouncing some of the fruits of Pharisaism: He here in like manner denounces its essence, the substitution of the outside appearance for the inward reality. Pharisaism can only reform corrupt institutions by glossing them over so that they may cease to offend public opinion; and it has no better notion of the reformation of itself. It has not yet learned, and from its very nature it never can learn, that the outward is the growth of the inward, and that consequently it is only a cleansing of the inward that can cleanse the outward also.

2. The conditions of Pharisaic repentance are satisfied if the grosser forms of sin which shock mankind are discontinued. True repentance can be content with nothing short of penitent David's cry, 'Renew a right spirit within me;' if only this prayer is answered it knows that the *outward life* will be renewed also. Pharisaic

holiness is built up by the multiplication of religious practices. True holiness is an inner offering of the heart to GOD, leaving Him to fill it with a spirit of devotion and self-sacrifice.

II. Whether it is yourself, or whether it is some one else, whom you wish to reform; whether it is a person or whether it is an institution, remember that there is but one way by which it can be done, viz., by allowing the SPIRIT of Holiness, which is the SPIRIT of CHRIST, to become the guiding principle. All reforms attempted by other means will be incomplete and transitory; *this* must be eternal as He is.

XLI.

The Spirit of Evil one in its Essence while variable in its Manifestations.

ST. MATT. xxiii. 29–36.

I.—1. Our Lord here exposes the final development of Pharisaism. Its spiritual blindness, which arose from its want of a spiritual sense, did not permit it to see that it was still committing the very same crimes which it was so ready to condemn in others.

2. The *form* in which GOD's message was now coming to Israel was different from the *form* in which it came in an earlier age, but the *message* was the same. The Pharisees were unable to see beyond the outward form, and therefore they were unable to recognise that the preaching of JESUS, at which they were rebelling, was exactly the same in its essence as the preaching of the prophets of old who had been rejected by their fathers whom they now condemned for so doing.

3. The evil spirit which had shown itself in the past, was culminating in the present generation, and was now coming to its extreme de-

velopment in the crucifixion of CHRIST and the persecution of those who should preach in His name.

4. By the line of action which the Pharisees were now pursuing they were showing that they had inherited the iniquity of their fathers, and that the spirit of envy and hatred which was in them was the same spirit which slew righteous Abel, and all who had suffered for their faith in GOD from his day until that present time.

II.—1. Reflect that it is possible that the same evil which we condemn in others may be working in us also, although through our spiritual blindness we know it not.

2. Reflect also, that if the spirit of evil is in us, we are equally guilty with those who manifest the evil that is in them in a manner which we ourselves condemn. The evil is in the spirit within; the manifestation of it will vary in different persons according to their character and their opportunities; but the guilt lies in the harbouring of the evil spirit, not in the particular way in which it is manifested.

XLII.

God's Temple left Desolate.

ST. MATT. xxiii. 37–39.

I.—1. This is the second time our Lord utters this mournful lamentation. When He foresaw that His death must take place in the favoured city He cannot contain Himself for sorrow (St. Luke, xiii. 34); and now that He is leaving the Temple for the last time His grief bursts forth afresh. 'Thou that killest the prophets!' What a new name for Jerusalem, 'the city of peace!'

2. When Israel came out of Egypt, full of the promise of a glorious future, GOD spoke of Himself as bearing them upon His wings, as an eagle beareth her young (Deut. xxxii. 11, 12): He would now be as a hen hiding her chickens. The metaphor has changed. It is not so full of glory—their past history had forfeited *that*—but it is more full of tender love. Even now, although He could foresee the destruction which was rapidly coming upon His nation, if they would but hide themselves under the shadow of *His wings they* might be safe. But they would *not.*

3. With these words our Lord leaves the Temple, and *their* house (no longer GOD'S house) is left to them desolate.

4. Yet not without hope. Nothing in GOD'S universe is without hope. His last words seem to point to a brighter future, when the nation which is now rejecting Him will receive Him as their king. We know not how or when this hope will be fulfilled. It is His promise.

II.—1. 'I would' and 'ye would not!' See how these simple words contain the history of GOD'S dealings with man from the Creation to the present time! See how they reveal to us the awful responsibility of choosing or rejecting which GOD has placed in our power!

2. See how, by the rejection of CHRIST, we are reduced from being GOD'S temple into being merely the habitation of a human spirit; and if we are no more than that, we are left desolate.

3. But we need be no longer desolate as soon as we can say with our hearts, 'Blessed is He that cometh in the name of the Lord.'

XLIII.

The Widow's Offering.

St. Mark, xii. 41–44.

I.—1. Our Lord was leaving the Temple desolate. And yet it was not all desolate. Nothing is wholly evil. As He watched the offerings made to God's treasury, how His heart must have leaped with joy at this little piece of real devotion in the midst of all the hollowness and hypocrisy which had wearied His spirit! This poor widow was giving her all. She had *two* mites. She could have kept one for herself. But she has such confidence in God that she can give Him all.

2. Jesus saw that the same spirit was in this poor woman which was in Himself. Was not He about to give His all into His Father's treasury by becoming obedient unto death, even the death of the Cross?

II.—1. Reflect how Jesus is always sitting over against God's treasury, always scrutinising *the offerings* which we cast therein.

2. God wants from every one of us that which

JESUS gave, that which the widow gave—our *all;* our possessions, our powers, our time, our whole being. All that we are or have is given to us by GOD, that we may offer it to Him. We are offering it to Him when we use it for true and proper ends. We may be spending money on ourselves, or on our families, and yet be offering it to Him: our time may be fully occupied with secular business, or the most trivial or menial tasks, yet it is an offering to Him if our appointed course of life requires these things from us. GOD wants our *all:* He values it as far as it is our all, however humble it may be. He looks for quality rather than quantity.

3. We can only give our all when we recognise that the Spirit of CHRIST is in us. It is ever His way to give *all.* He will offer us up as He offered Himself up. We must leave ourselves to Him, and be ready to go with Him, and to suffer with Him.

XLIV.

Human Scheming and Divine Order.

ST. MATT. xxvi. 1–5.

I.—1. Contrast the calmness with which JESUS can look forward to His death with the uncertainty and confusion of those who are plotting against Him (ver. 2 with vv. 3, 4, 5).

2. He knows that His Father is working in all the events of life, and that through Him the victory of good over evil is secure.

They think that by scheming they can gain their ends. But human scheming is powerless against the Divine order.

3. It was the FATHER'S will that the SON should suffer on the feast-day. That feast had been for centuries a foreshadowing of the Cross. How weak are the intrigues of a few men against the Divine decree!

II.—1. Learn that all things work together for good to those who love GOD; that He can turn the fierceness of man to His praise.

2. *The powers* of evil may scheme to destroy

the CHRIST of GOD, and their triumph may appear complete: but there is an invisible SPIRIT which is stronger than all the visible influences of the world, and those who trust in Him can afford to wait with patience, knowing that He sitteth above the water-floods, and remaineth a King for ever.

XLV.

Jesus Betrayed by the Self-seeker.

ST. MATT. xxvi. 14–16.

I.—1. We do not know all the steps in the downward path which had brought Judas so low. There had been, no doubt, avarice, disappointed ambition, anger at being detected, culminating in that intense hatred of good which evil ever feels when in its presence. All this leads to the degrading desire to gain an advantage for himself by inflicting an injury upon the Innocent One. He will gain thirty pieces of silver, and for that he will compass the destruction of the SON of GOD.

2. There is no lower form of evil than that which seeks to profit by injuring that which it knows to be good.

II.—1. The sinful germ which fully developed itself in the crime of Judas is to be found (*a*) when by silence or by consent we take part with those who oppose that which is holy *because we fear to* displease them; or (*b*) when we

detract from the goodness of others because we seem to gain by thus disparaging them.

2. We should be horrified at the thought of betraying JESUS for thirty pieces of silver; but have we never betrayed Him to save ourselves from a few minutes' ridicule, or to gratify our own feelings of envy at the superior holiness of another?

XLVI.

Jesus Trains us by Teaching us to be Humble and Obedient in Little Things.

ST. LUKE, xxii. 7–13.

I.—1. A time of great trial was at hand for the Apostles. Their Master must train them to be prepared for it. He does so by calling out their obedience and their willingness to perform humble duties at His bidding. They must not doubt His word; they must simply follow His directions, although they might not be able to see the use of them. It was a very common-place thing they were to do.

2. He would also teach them that He takes notice of what we call trifles. His eye is on a servant bearing a pitcher of water. Nothing is beneath Him, as nothing is above Him.

3. They must learn also that when He is absent from them, they are to influence others in His name and by His SPIRIT Which is in them. The master of the guest-chamber would at once grant their request when they came in *the name of* JESUS.

II.—1. It is in the performance of little common duties that we are trained for the higher service of JESUS, and are prepared for great calls, if ever He sends them. Never despise duties because they are small.

2. No duty, however small or common, is really trifling, since His eye is on all.

3. It is in obedience to Him in the performance of our duties that we are able to influence others in His name and for His sake.

XLVII.

Apostolic Self-Examination.

ST. MATT. xxvi. 20–25.

I. It must have startled them to hear such words, 'One of you shall betray Me.' See how they received the saying.

1. Judas received it with hypocrisy and false humility. He asked, 'Master, is it I?' Had he not already arranged to betray Him? How could he thus dare to attempt to deceive the Searcher of hearts? Have we never dared the same?

2. The other disciples receive the saying with wondering fear. They did not begin to suspect one another; they did not even suspect Judas. Instead of suspecting others, and trying to fasten the charge elsewhere, each one recognised that the possibility of so dreadful a fall was in himself. 'Lord, is it I?'

II.—1. Let us learn from this the true spirit of self-examination. If it were said to a congregation of Christians now, 'One of you shall betray

Me,' what would be our reply? Would it be, 'Though all deny yet will not I?' That was St. Peter's mistake. Would the words fill us with curiosity? 'Whom can He mean? It must be this person or that person.' Would it lead us to suspect each other? Or rather would the answer of each one be that of the Apostles, 'Lord, is it I?'

2. Learn that a proper self-mistrust is necessary for a true trust in GOD. We do not know ourselves; we do not know how low we might fall if we were tempted. Let us ever draw near to our Lord, not in self-confidence or in fancied superiority to others, but in humble reliance on Him, in Whose strength alone we are kept from being among His betrayers.

XLVIII.

The Mystery of the Passover Unfolded.

ST. LUKE, xxii. 14–18.

I.—1. JESUS feels that the purpose of His life is about to be accomplished. With true human feeling He rejoices that that to which He has long looked forward has at last come to pass. In partaking of this last Passover, He felt that the whole Jewish system was finding its fulfilment.

2. The Passover commemorated the deliverance of GOD'S chosen people through the death of the first-born. JESUS is the true First-Born (Rom. viii. 29), the Perfect SON; it is through His death that the redeemed of GOD are to be delivered from the bondage of evil.

3. The Passover is *fulfilled*, not *abolished*. In the Holy Eucharist we still commemorate the sacrifice of the First-Born. It is through the death of our Elder Brother that we are redeemed.

4. There is to be a full and final fulfilment *in the completed* kingdom of GOD; in that

kingdom the cry of the redeemed is, 'Worthy is the Lamb that was slain.'

II.—1. Contemplate the eternal purpose of GOD by which it was ordained that He who should redeem men should be one of their own flesh and blood, the perfect SON of GOD, the perfect Elder Brother of the human race.

2. Who can say what wider fulfilment of this truth there may be in the fuller revelation of the kingdom of GOD? or what more complete union we shall have with JESUS when we shall be made like Him, as He in His incarnation was made like us?

XLIX.

The Gift of Jesus.

ST. MATT. xxvi. 26–28. ST. LUKE, xxii. 19, 20.
1 COR. xi. 23–25.

I.—1. JESUS is making His will. The gi which He is leaving to us is nothing less tha Himself, to be in us for evermore a Livin SPIRIT, to mould us after His own likeness.

2. And in order that He may bestow upo us that which will ever enable us to make ou own the divine mystery that through His deat He is our life, He institutes for us this hol Sacrament.

3. Consider the simple character of the ou ward signs which He here consecrates to th high purpose. Bread and wine, the complete fruits of GOD'S free gift and man's labour; is nc His life in us the fruit of His divine grace an of His human toil? The bread; it is 'Hi Body broken for us,' the mystery of His Deatl in which we all die. 'Bread-corn is bruised (Isa. xxviii. 28.) 'Bread, which strengthen man's heart:' how could He better reveal t us that by His stripes we are healed? Th wine; it is His Blood shed for us, 'Wine, tha maketh glad the heart of man.' Is not th blood the life? and is it not His life in us tha *filleth us with joy*? Under the old dispensatio

the people were ordered to abstain from blood; they were living under a law which condemned them but which could not give them life. But this is the *New* Testament. CHRIST, Who is our Life, has come: 'This is My blood: drink ye *all* of it.' He is now ever living in us, so that He may do His FATHER'S will in us, and through us.

II.—1. It is ever GOD'S way to educate both our minds and spirits, by leading us through the visible to the invisible. The visible conveys to us the invisible, not locally, but spiritually. If we were to lose the visible, there would be nothing to enable us to penetrate to the invisible. But it is the invisible which is the real.

2. All visible things are in one sense *sacraments, i. e.* outward manifestations of invisible realities. In this gift of JESUS we have a Gospel Sacrament ordained for us. To the spiritual eye He is in this sacrament. We see Him in the outward signs, which are the manifestations of His love. Has He not consecrated the bread to be the communion of His Body broken for us, *i. e.* His death upon the cross? And is not the wine the communion of His Blood shed for us, *i. e.* His life, which He is now living in us? To the spiritual sense there is a real and spiritual presence of JESUS in His sacrament.

L.

True and False Greatness.

ST. LUKE, xxii. 24-27.

I. How true to nature! How universal is the contention who shall be greatest! From children in the nursery to kings upon their thrones, the question is always being argued who shall be greatest? The common notion of greatness is that it consists in 'exercising lordship' (ver. 25). In this sense we all desire to be greatest; to be marked in some manner as distinguished above our fellows; in position, in family, in wealth, in intellect. But this is the Gentile or heathen notion of greatness. The Christian notion of greatness is to be most like GOD. GOD is not chiefly power or intellect: if He had been so He would not have created us or redeemed us. He is chiefly Love; the love that consists in the giving of self. Very few can achieve greatness in the worldly sense. All can become great in CHRIST'S sense. He Who is the image of the FATHER is among us and in us *as One that* serveth. We are most truly great

when we are most one with Him, when we are ministering to others and giving ourselves for their sake.

II. How often we feel the temptation of desiring to be the greatest! How keenly it assails us when engaged in conversation! Let the words of JESUS ever sound in our ears, 'Ye shall not be so; I am among you as One that serveth.'

LI.

'He made Himself of no reputation.'

ST. JOHN, xiii. 1–7.

I.—1. The disciples had been disputing which should be the greatest. JESUS dreaded above all things lest a spirit of self-exaltation should show itself among His followers. Now that He is about to leave them, He will give them, by setting them such an example as they can never forget, one more practical instance of His humiliation for their sake, so that they may learn to humiliate themselves for each other's sake. He washes their feet, thus performing for them the work of the humblest.

2. Notice the strong contrast St. John draws between His essential greatness and His lowly action (ver. 3, 4).

The whole is to teach them that the humblest service rendered to another may partake of the *truest form of* greatness, and to set before them *a parable, the* full meaning of which the future *should make* known to them. The object of

His Incarnation had been that by His self-abasement men might be cleansed.

II. We can never dwell too much upon the self-emptying of the SON of GOD in 'making Himself of no reputation, and in taking upon Him the form of a servant.'

Contemplate the deep truth taught in verses 3, 4.

LIII.

That we should do for others what He has done for us.

ST. JOHN, xiii. 12–17.

I.—1. Having thus taught His disciples, by a practical illustration, in what His greatness (*i.e.* true greatness) consists, JESUS gives them the commandment that they should do as He has done. He, their Lord and Master, has washed their feet; if they would be lords and masters, let them wash one another's feet.

2. This command is not to be obeyed literally. Such a custom would have no meaning now; but it is obeyed in spirit when we give up our own way in order that we may help others, when we smooth their difficulties and make allowance for their infirmities.

II.—1. How much happier life would be if we could all thus 'wash one another's feet!' *How much* purer also! For if it is done in the *spirit of* CHRIST (*i.e.* in the spirit of self-forgetfulness *and* non-obtrusiveness), it has in itself a

cleansing power, softening the heart and blessing both him who gives and him who receives.

2. But to admire works of humility is far easier than to practise them. JESUS knew this, and He knew how weakening it is to be constantly approving of what is good without carrying it out in practice, therefore He adds, 'If ye know these things, happy are ye if ye do them.'

3. To know what is good is easy, to do it is hard, and therefore blessed. Do not wait for some great opportunity. Begin at once the blessed task of washing one another's feet. There are daily opportunities in every life.

LIV.

God Glorified by the casting out of Self-seeking.

ST. JOHN, xiii. 18–32.

I.—1. The conflict with the presence of evil in the band of chosen disciples was one of the most painful conflicts which JESUS had to wage. This evil must be cast out, as all sin must be cast out, if the Church of GOD is to be glorified. This discipline is sad but salutary. When the conflict is over and Judas has left them, JESUS does not say anything harsh of him, but only rejoices that good must finally conquer evil.

2. Judas represented the spirit of worldly pride which JESUS had just rebuked; his notions of the Messiah were carnal. This spirit must be got rid of, and when it is cast out, the humiliation of the Son of Man, which is a stumbling-block to such as Judas, is found to be the triumph of true greatness over false. Thus GOD is glorified in the Son of Man, for in Him His true glory is manifested. And that this great truth may be known GOD shall glorify *the Son of Man*. *Because* CHRIST JESUS made

Himself of no reputation, and took upon Him the form of a servant, and became obedient unto the death of the Cross, *therefore* GOD has highly exalted Him, so that all may learn that self-sacrifice is the truest form of greatness.

II. Learn how every principle which glorifies self and which opposes the Divine idea of true greatness, must be cast out of the Church and of the individual soul, if GOD is to be glorified in it.

LV.

Self-trust may have to be broken down by Bitter Experience.

ST. MATT. xxvi. 31–35. ST. LUKE, xxii. 31–34.

I.—1. Although Judas had been expelled, there still lingered among the disciples something of the old spirit of self-glorification. But it was based upon ignorance of self rather than on wilful opposition to good; it is therefore treated with gentle severity.

2. JESUS warns Peter that his self-confidence cannot stand. The very expression He uses should have told him that the trial which is coming upon him is intended for his benefit. Satan will sift him 'as wheat;' wheat is sifted that the worthless may be separated from the useful; and JESUS has prayed that Peter may be found among the good seed. But Peter prefers to believe in himself rather than in CHRIST'S word, or even in His prayers. He must learn by bitter experience that everything that is of self must be broken down so that we may learn *that in JESUS* alone is our strength. And it is

only when Peter has thus been broken down that he is able to strengthen his brethren.

II.—1. The bitter experience of a shameful fall may be necessary to teach us that our trust has been in self, instead of in GOD.

2. It is only in the strength of our own conversion (*i.e.* in being emptied of self and in resting on CHRIST) that we can attempt to minister to the spiritual wants of others.

LVI.

To follow Jesus needs a Soldier Spirit.

ST. LUKE, xxii. 35-38.

I.—1. JESUS cannot forget that He is leavi
those whom He has called to follow Him, a
that He is leaving them in great danger. A
they prepared to trust Him? He reminds the
that they had trusted Him before, and th
they lacked nothing. But He must warn the
that their future trial will be a far harder on
Their work hitherto had not been in oppositi
to men's prejudices and passions; but it mu
now be such that it will rouse the most bitt
hostility. It must be a work of battle, and
will need a sword. The events of the next fe
hours will teach them *that*. These events w
show how opposed is the spirit of the world
the Spirit of CHRIST.

2. But the disciples are still slow to unde
stand Him; they are for ever putting a liter
meaning to His words; 'Here are two sword
They have yet to learn that the weapons
their warfare are not carnal. Almost in d

spair at their slowness, He exclaims, 'It is enough.'

II. How truly do His words describe the Christian life! 'He that hath no sword, let him sell his garment and buy one.' Woe be to us when we forget that that life is a warfare! when we wrap ourselves in the garment of ease and contentment, instead of girding on the sword of the SPIRIT. If our Leader had to fight, not by violence or external force, but with all the powers of His inner Spirit, against envy, hatred, falsehood, sloth, cowardice, injustice, His followers must therefore *arm themselves with the same mind.* (1 Pet. iv. 1.) And since He has been with us hitherto in less arduous tasks, in days when temptation was less sore than it is now, will He not still be in us, to fight for us the battle in which He Himself has conquered?

LVII.

Jesus in His Agony.

ST. MATT. xxvi. 36–39. ST. LUKE, xxii. 41–44.

I.—1. Let us contemplate JESUS alone wi
His FATHER in His agony. But let us n
seek to intrude too closely into this sacr
mystery; there must be secrets which t
Perfect SON shares with the FATHER alon
Let us, like the disciples, tarry outside whi
He prays.

2. Contemplate the physical effects of H
agony. His sweat is like great drops of bloo
The blood is connected with the emotion
it rushes to the face in any great excitemer
Here it flows forth in the intensity of H
feelings: He is pouring out His life in t
agony of His heart.

3. What can be the mental cause of th
terrible distress? It could not be that H
was dreading the sufferings that were comi
upon Him. He *did* shrink from them; H
would not have been true man if He had n
done so; but He never reckoned bodily suff
ings to be amongst the greatest of calamitie
He Who told the women of Jerusalem to we
not for Him, is not now weeping for Himself.

4. Remember that He was not merely

man, but *The* Man; the Head and Elder Brother of the whole human race. As such He feels all the sorrows and all the sins of the human family as if they were His own. Not that He feels these sins upon His *conscience;* that would be a fictitious feeling. But He feels them as a father feels the sins of the son whom he loves, and whom he identifies with himself.

5. He feels also a shrinking from death. He does not fear it as a coward fears it, but He recognises that death had only become a necessity for man because of sin; and in the thought that He must pass through death He feels how closely He is identified with the sinful race. He is thus tasting of the wrath of GOD, not in His own consciousness, but in suffering the effects of that wrath, viz. death.

II. In this contemplation we cannot but feel—

1. Humiliation, that our sinfulness can thus drag down the one perfect SON of GOD, and overwhelm Him with confusion.

2. Love, that He would not shrink from this for our sakes.

3. Faith, that so great a sacrifice will be accepted as a sufficient atonement for our sins.

LVIII.

Jesus looks for our Sympathy in His Sorrow

ST. MARK, xiv. 37-40.

I.—1. Although no man can enter into t
full depth of His agony, yet JESUS longs
human sympathy in His loneliness. Is not t
one of those touches of nature which rev
Him to be of our own flesh and blood? H
in our sorrow do we look for some kindr
spirit, whose sympathy supports us, even if
can do no more than sympathise!

2. JESUS comes again and again to His d
ciples, looking for some expression of feeling
their part, but He finds them only sleepi
They can sleep while He is in an agony on th
account!

II.—1. But how often this experience of I
is repeated! The mother toils on patiently
her child, who never gives one thought to l
labour; the father is agonised in prayer for
son, who is utterly careless for himself;
teacher wearies himself in anxiety for

scholars, who perhaps ridicule him; the priest labours for his people, and his efforts are unregarded. Let such reflect that they are bearing a portion of their Master's Cross, that His much-loved disciples forgat Him in His hour of agony. Let them be encouraged by the hope that their work, like His, will not be lost; it will find its answer after many days.

2. Let all who thus feel bitterly the carelessness of those for whom they labour, learn to labour on, and so to watch with CHRIST, that they may not add to His sorrows. When they faint and grow weary, He whispers, 'Can ye not watch one hour?' Is He not ever saying, 'Watch with Me while I go and pray yonder?' All work done *for* Him, if it is done *in* Him, is done *with* Him. Is He not praying 'yonder?' Can we not watch?

LIX.

The Will of the Father the Pivot of the Universe.

ST. MATT. xxvi. 39–42.

I.—1. The sacred mystery of Gethsemane is revealed to us, in order that we may learn that the sacrifice which JESUS offered was a true sacrifice of His will, and that it was a real struggle for Him to accept the degradation of death. It was a true prayer which He prayed that if it were possible some other way might be found than the way of the Cross. This internal conflict must have been going on all through His life. It here comes to the surface, so that we may be permitted to see it.

2. In the bitterness of the struggle, His soul is tossed to and fro; He prays over and over again, saying the same words; but as it is made clear to Him that the Cross is the will of the FATHER, He has but one prayer, 'Thy will be done.' He recognises that the FATHER'S will is the mainspring of the *universe; for* His will is not mere power or

force, but perfect holiness, the one motive by which alone divine order (which is the bliss of creation) is secured. As the perfect SON of the FATHER, His meat is to do His will. The Divine Word which ushered in His Incarnation, 'Lo I come to do Thy will,' is echoed now by the Human Word, 'Not My will, but Thine.'

3. His prayer, therefore, is answered by the sending of an angel, not to remove the cup, but to strengthen Him to drink it. This is the truest answer to those prayers which we pray in ignorance of our FATHER'S will. In all prayers there must be the petition, 'Not as I will, but as Thou wilt.'

II. Learn that the one Sacrifice which availeth to put away sin was the Sacrifice of will offered by the perfect SON of GOD, our Elder Brother. Our sin can never be put away, unless we, in union with Him, offer up our will to the one Divine will, which is holiness and bliss.

LX.

The Lesson of Lost Opportunities.

ST. MATT. xxvi. 44-46.

I.—1. While the three chosen disciples have been sleeping, another has been watchful enough —too watchful. It is Judas. How often does the principle of evil seem more active and energetic than the principle of love!

2. Their chance of watching with Him is over now, and there seems a touch of irony in His tone, 'Sleep on now, and take your rest.' He would let them learn the bitter lesson, that lost opportunities can never be recalled. Had they taken His warning, 'Watch and pray, lest ye enter into temptation,' they might have stood firm, but the opportunity had been let slip; fear must be the fruit of sloth; 'they all forsook Him and fled.'

3. But He would not drive them to despair because they had neglected this one opportunity. Immediately He opens out to them a *new* one, and shows them that there is a work *they can yet do*: 'Rise, let us be going.'

II.—1. Contemplate lost opportunities. The wasted hours of youth, the neglected warnings of conscience, the omitted opportunities of well-doing. Is any contemplation more sad? Not one of them can be recalled. Every one has left its mark on the character. As the hopelessness of recalling the past sinks into our soul, how bitterly true seem our Lord's words, 'Sleep on now, and take your rest;' you have chosen the lot of the sluggard, now reap its fruits.

2. But let His awakening voice also reach us: 'Rise, let us be going.' The past is no longer ours, but the present is. There are opportunities still left. Let them not be wasted in idle lamentations over what is inevitable.

LXI.

Jesus and Judas.

ST. MATT. xxvi. 47–50. ST. LUKE, xxii. 47, 48.

I.—1. The human mind shrinks from the contemplation of this terrible scene, in which perfect sinlessness is placed side by side in vivid contrast with the false-hearted, cruel, self-seeking traitor. The evangelists in mentioning him speak of him simply as 'one of the twelve;' no worse condemnation can be pronounced upon him than this title expresses.

2. But turn from him to the Betrayed, and see in Him the perfect expression of long-suffering patience. He had witnessed the gradual hardening of Judas's heart. He had foreseen in what it would end. (St. John, vi. 70.) He knew how he was plotting against Him. (St. John, xiii. 27.) Yet He never gave the other disciples any cause to suspect him. To the last they were ignorant of his treachery. (St. Luke, xxii. 23.) How gentle must have been His manner towards him! If He distinguished him at all from the rest it was by the tenderness with which *He treated him.* Even now at the last, with the

loathsome kiss of this wretched traitor fresh upon Him, He is nothing but gentleness. He will make one last appeal. He will let him know that it is not even yet too late.

II.—1. How hard it is to be compelled to be in presence of some one who dislikes us, whom we suspect of desiring to injure us! How hard not to show our abhorrence of such a one! JESUS was for three years in such a presence, and yet never betrayed by a single word or look any desire to rid Himself of it. He could distinguish between the man and his sin; while He loathed the sin He still loved the man, He still recognised him as part of our common humanity, He could still speak to him as 'friend' or 'companion,' He could still appeal to him as the Son of Man!

2. Learn that it is *sin*, not *sinful men*, that GOD hates. Those whom we feel inclined to dislike on account of their sins are still 'friends,' or 'companions,' as Judas was. We should seek to win them *from* their sins, not to cast them away in their sins. JESUS casts no one off; even when they are casting themselves off He seeks to win them by gentleness and patience.

LXII.

Jesus Arrested.

St. John, xviii. 3-7. St. Luke, xxii. 52, 53.

I.—1. Probably the confusion which overwhelmed those who came to seize Jesus was nothing more than an extreme form of that shrinking which guilt ever feels in the presence of holiness. It was a homage offered involuntarily to the Perfect Man.

2. The whole scene is a representative one. We see the Holy One surrounded by His enemies and led away captive, yet at the same time displaying a hidden power, the power of sinlessness, which they are compelled to recognise as superior to the brute force on which they are relying. They have nothing whereof to accuse Him; indeed, by their silence when He appeals to the blamelessness of His life in their midst, they stand themselves convicted. He alone remains full of dignity while thus insulted and maltreated. Yet He suffers Himself to be taken. He recognises that this is their hour and the *power of darkness*. Evil has its triumphs, and

this is one of them, short-lived as they all are. Evil must proceed to its full development in order that its true nature may be known; the arresters of JESUS must lead to Caiaphas, to Pilate, to Herod, to the Cross.

II.—1. Meditate on the involuntary homage which evil is ever compelled to pay to good; how, even in the moment of its unopposed success, it recognises that there is something more noble and powerful than itself.

2. Learn how the triumph of evil contains within itself the seeds of its own destruction.

LXIII.

Impetuosity no Substitute for Watchfulness.

St. Matt. xxvi. 51–54. St. John, xviii. 10, 11.

I.—1. Contrast the two actors in this scene. Peter, full of fiery impulse, trusting to carnal weapons for the defence of truth; Jesus, calm and full of dignity, knowing that the fulfilment of the Father's will is the one safeguard.

2. This contrast is the result of the contrast in Gethsemane; Peter overwhelmed by sloth: Jesus wrestling in the agony of His soul, and receiving strength to accept the appointed cup. Peter fancies that one impetuous act can atone for his past neglect. Jesus knows that the surrender of self which the Father looks for in His children, is not the work of a moment of excitement, but is the sustained offering of every action of life. It was ever in His power to escape from the degradation He was enduring for our sake (ver. 53); every separate step in *His passion* He embraced by a separate act *of will.*

II.—1. Is our devotion to our Master like that of Peter? Confident when untried, yet too slothful to watch one hour; suddenly bursting out in some moment of excitement, yet wavering and trembling before the slightest opposition.

2. No mistake is greater than to think that a Christian life can be built upon human impulse: it is only by entering into the entire self-surrender of Gethsemane that the will of the FATHER becomes our own, so that He dwells in us and we in Him.

LXIV.

The Loneliness of Jesus.

ST. MATT. xxvi. 56. ST. JOHN, xviii. 8, 9.

I.—1. Although the disciples had forgotten to watch with JESUS, He is not forgetful of them. He pleads for them; He is seized while they go free. Is not this a picture in miniature of His whole work for them and for us?

2. JESUS is now left alone. Not one remains to sympathise with Him or to support Him. Is not this also a picture of His whole life? Do we not feel that all through it He stands alone? Alone in the midst of unsympathising multitudes, which is the most bitter of all forms of loneliness. Alone in the perfection of His sinless manhood. Alone in the mystery of His eternal GODHEAD.

II.—1. It may be that it is our lot to be alone; to have no friend to love us, or to be loved by us, to be surrounded by those with whom we can feel no spiritual communion, and who are unable *to enter into* our thoughts. If it is so it is a

little fragment of the cross of JESUS which He has given us to bear. But remember that His loneliness was not the loneliness of sullenness, or of selfishness, or of sentimentality; it was the loneliness which arose from His superior holiness and from the completeness of His self-sacrifice. He never withdrew Himself from His fellow-men, it was *they* who 'forsook *Him* and fled.'

2. The loneliness which we create for ourselves, because of our fancied superiority to others, is not the loneliness of JESUS, it is the loneliness of pride. The loneliness of JESUS is that which may come upon us if we surrender ourselves entirely to our FATHER'S will. But the loneliness of JESUS is not loneliness, for by thus embracing it we become 'not alone, for the FATHER is with us.' (St. John, xvi. 32.)

LXV.

The Dignity of the Holy One in the Presence of His Foes.

ST. JOHN, xviii. 12–14, 19–23.

I.—1. The multitude drag JESUS first to the house of Annas. Probably they hoped by questioning Him to find some charge against Him. It was necessary that they should have some accusation to lay before Pilate. They had determined upon His death, but this could only be brought about by the authority of the Roman Governor. They hoped to entangle Him in His talk, to draw some words out of Him which might be twisted into a charge of tumult or rebellion. For this reason they ask Him about His disciples and His doctrine. But He declines to answer them. He claims His right as one accused. It is for His accusers to state their charge. The time had passed for Him to reason with them or to seek to convince them; they had hardened their consciences against that.

2. *Although* the meekest and humblest of *men, there is* a true dignity about Him which

refuses to cringe before any one. He is far more dignified than His accusers; even while being charged as a criminal, and surrounded by bitter enemies, He knows how to rebuke. (ver. 23.)

II.—1. Learn that there is a time to be silent as well as a time to speak; a time to refuse to grant the requests of others as well as a time to grant them. It is right to refuse when to grant them will cause others to neglect their own duties, or will involve them in a sinful course of action.

2. Learn also that there is a true dignity which is justified in refusing to give way, and which is quite consistent with that true unselfishness which springs from the desire to consider others before ourselves.

LXVI.

Jesus proved by His Enemies to be Innocent.

ST. MARK, xiv. 55–61.

I. The attempt to extort some compromising statement from JESUS having failed, His foes must now make good some accusation against Him. They must endeavour both to alienate the minds of the people from Him, and to frame some charge which will justify them in taking Him before Pilate. But this attempt also breaks down. False witnesses appear against Him, but cannot agree upon any charge. They accuse Him of threatening to destroy the temple. They refer to some words spoken three years before, and these they distort and misrepresent. JESUS listens in silence. He knows that His accuser and His judges alike know that the charges were false. It is often better to meet false accusations in silence.

II.—1. Consider how the attempt to convict JESUS of crime becomes by its failure a powerful *testimony* to His perfect innocence. All *ingenuity* of His enemies can produce only

empty accusation which is abandoned almost as soon as it is made, and which crumbles into nothing in the presence of the dignified silence of the accused.

2. See how the very efforts of His enemies force us to be on His side even if we were not so before. He is suffering unjustly. As the story proceeds we shall see how every one testifies to this, even those most hostile to Him. Herod, Pilate, Judas, the penitent thief, the centurion, all unite in declaring that 'He has done nothing amiss.' No sight appeals so powerfully to our sympathies as the sight of undeserved suffering. Short-sighted enemies of the Holy One, who, in seeking to alienate the minds of the Jewish people from Him, enlist the sympathies of the whole human race on His behalf!

3. In meditating upon the sufferings of JESUS, ever remember that the sufferer is proved, even by the unwilling testimony of His foes, to be the absolutely sinless One.

LXVII.

Those who judge Jesus pronounce their own Condemnation.

ST. MATT. xxvi. 62–68.

I.—1. The enemies of JESUS now endeavour to convict Him of blasphemy. It had been said that He claimed to be the SON of GOD; He shall now be asked in the most solemn manner whether He still makes that claim. Picture the scene! The High Priest rises with much ceremony and puts JESUS on His oath: 'I adjure thee by the living GOD.' The answer comes more promptly and more decisively than they could have expected: 'Thou hast said.' He Who would not submit to unauthorised questioning, Who gave no answer to unfounded accusations, cannot be silent after this solemn adjuration. To have been silent would have been equal to a denial of the truth. Here He must speak, although in doing so He pronounces the condemnation of the high priest. But he has brought it upon himself: 'Thou hast said;' he *who has said* it must find it true indeed; the *day must* come when the judge and the accused

must change places, when he who now sits in condemnation judging unjustly, must himself be judged with clear and terrible justice by his Prisoner.

2. The effect of His declaration is immediate. It is clear that the high priest had used the title 'the SON of GOD,' in its highest sense, and that JESUS had accepted it in that sense. At once His judges declare that there is no further need of witnesses, that He has spoken blasphemy, and is guilty of death.

II. See, again, how marvellously the toils devised against Him by His enemies turn to His glory and their destruction. They have proved Him innocent, they now draw from Him the clearest assertion of His own essential GODHEAD, and the most definite enunciation of the truth on which the Church is built. Well may the high priest rend his clothes, not at the fancied blasphemy, but in dismay that he has thus furnished the sword which must destroy himself and all other enemies of the truth. No weapon that is formed against the Holy One can prosper. Those who condemn Him to death are thereby condemning themselves to the worst form of death, the darkness and blindness of spiritual death.

LXVIII.

Jesus denied by Peter.

St. Matt. xxvi. 69–74.

I. While Jesus has thus been tried, and has boldly borne witness to the truth, one of His disciples who had boasted much of his faithfulness, was being tried also. He must have known that if he would be with his Master, he must be tried with Him. But how different the result. Let us trace the steps of Peter's fall.

1. Boastfulness and self-confidence, rejection of warnings.

2. Sloth and want of watchfulness.

3. The attempt to serve two masters; a desire to be near Jesus, and yet a shrinking from bearing the cross with Him.

4. Moral cowardice. Probably he mixed *with the* crowd in the endeavour to appear *unconcerned* at what was going on; this made *him unreal*, and therefore unprepared for trial.

5. *Having* been guilty of one act of deceit

he sinks lower and lower, taking refuge in sinful and unmeaning oaths.

II. Remember that the sin of Peter is the sin of the professed Christian, who by sloth and want of moral courage and straightforwardness, forgets his call to be a disciple, descends to the careless tone of those about him, and so denies his Master.

LXIX.

The Look of Jesus.

ST. LUKE, xxii. 60–62.

I. 'IMMEDIATELY the cock crew.' It seems but a trifling circumstance to recall a man from so complete a fall; yet it filled Peter's mind with a flood of memories; it brought back in one instant his boastful confidence in the upper room, his weariness in the garden, his impetuous ardour when his Master was arrested, and now his miserable fall! All the loving intercourse of the past three years had ended in this! No wonder that as JESUS turned and looked upon him his heart filled to bursting, and he went out and wept bitterly.

II.—1. Consider how GOD will sometimes speak to a human soul through what appears to be the most trivial circumstances, especially through circumstances which arouse some latent memory of the past. Nothing is too small, as nothing is too great, for GOD'S purpose. The *crowing of the* cock was nothing to the hundreds

who were thronging the palace o tne high-priest, but it was everything to Peter. In GOD'S hands it was the means of lifting him out of darkness into light. It may be that what to others are trifles, to us may be filled with a message from GOD. The revisiting of an old home, the sight of a once familiar flower, a strain of music, a passing sound or scent, may flood the memory with associations of a better and happier past, and may be accompanied to us by that look of JESUS which to Peter accompanied the crowing of the cock—the look which summons to penitence, and which promises pardon.

2. Let us bless GOD that in many a soul which is now denying JESUS, there may be hidden away memories which His look may one day revive to its conversion and restoration.

LXX.

Despair.

ST. MATT. xxvii. 3–10.

I.—1. Witness the result of successful sin; for it *was* successful. No one found Judas out, no one stopped him, he gains his object, there is no court of justice to condemn him. But there is something stronger than external force, which brings the sinner to his merited punishment; it is the sin itself; it burns within him, so that he condemns himself, passes judgment upon himself, pronounces himself to be without hope, rushes to his own destruction! The kingdom of GOD is within us, blessing us when we do His will, breaking us in pieces if we think to rebel against Him.

2. Could Judas have been forgiven? Yes, certainly. To the very last JESUS was ready to receive him. It was because the Cross led him to despair, instead of to hope, that he rushed upon his destruction. Despair led him to the very place where he could find no sympathy, the company of his fellow-sinners. 'What is *that to us? see* thou to that.' How hard and

selfish sin must be, when it can thus close the heart to the mental agonies of a brother! If he had been but led to the Cross! There was the only Heart wide enough to receive him! We might have had an eighth word from the Cross more full of comfort than all the others.

II.—1. Let no sinner flatter himself because his sin is not discovered. He carries that within him which must find him out, and which must work his destruction—*the sin itself.* If the judgment which comes upon sin beyond the grave is nothing more than the self-judgment of Judas, could anything be more terrible?

2. But let not this thought work despair. Despair is the device of Satan; before we sin he persuades us that sin is of very little account; after we have sinned he turns round upon us, and says, 'See how fearful your guilt is; it is beyond repentance.' Despair is the only thing GOD cannot forgive, because despair kills faith. The Cross was very near to Judas, if he had but known it; it is very near to every sinner.

LXXI.

Contrast between the Carnal and Spiritual Idea of Power.

ST. JOHN, xviii. 28–32. ST. MATT. xxvii. 11–14.

I. THE enemies of JESUS hurry Him off t Pilate, perhaps hoping that he will condem Him without inquiry. But Pilate demand that some accusation should be laid agains Him. They cry out that He has made Himsel a King. It was not for this that the Jewisl council had condemned Him, but for blas phemy. But the enemies of truth do not car that they contradict themselves, or one another if only they can destroy it.

II.—1. It is as claiming to be a king that H stands before the Roman Governor. Con template the meeting between JESUS and Pilate the representatives of the two great principle of spiritual and carnal power. The one wielding all the mighty influence of the greatest empir *the* world has known, the kingdom founded *upon force;* the other with no visible power t

support Him, yet the King of the kingdom of truth, which must prevail.

2. How constantly are these two kingdoms set in opposition, the one to the other! Force against Truth! How the world always believes in force! 'If thou be the Christ, come down from the cross.' How constantly force seems triumphant! How often Truth appears to us to be crucified, as on Good Friday! Yet there always follows an Easter Day, when Truth comes out of the grave in which it had been hidden, and its kingdom endures while the powers of the world crumble and perish.

3. Be confident that Truth must conquer, if it only knows how, like JESUS, to suffer, to be silent, and to be strong.

LXXII.

The Kingdom of Realities.

St. John, xviii. 33–38.

I.—1. Jesus is asked by Pilate if the charge brought against Him, that He claims to be a king, is a true one. He answers, that He does not claim to be a king in the sense in which Pilate would understand the title—a king in rivalry with the kings of the world; if He had been such, He would have appealed to *force*, which is the foundation of all such kingdoms. But His kingdom is one which rests upon truth, *i. e.* upon realities. He had come into the world to bear witness to realities, to an unseen order of things hidden from the carnal mind.

2. To Jesus the kingdoms of the world were unrealities, mere passing phantoms, temporary expressions of human ideas. The true realities are the laws of love, and justice, and holiness, which proceed from God: on these His kingdom rests; and being thus founded, it must abide, while the kingdoms founded on force must perish.

3. *All* who are of the truth hear His voice;

all who are *real*, all who listen to GOD's voice within, will accept Him as the Revealer of realities. He is here placing Pilate on his trial. Was Pilate of the truth? If so, he would hear His voice. Thus was the Gospel preached to Pilate. Pilate was a heathen, and could have had no preparatory training, but he had a conscience, he might have been of the truth. But he was not of the truth; his conduct is that of one who is tampering with conscience. In scorn, or apathy, he asks, 'What is truth?' and without waiting for an answer, he goes out and quenches the light within him.

II. To be true to the voice of GOD, which speaks in the conscience of every man, is the surest way to be led to Him Who came to bear witness to the truth, and to find that kingdom which is not of this world, but which is within us, righteousness, and peace, and joy in the HOLY GHOST.

LXXIII.

Jesus before Herod.

ST. LUKE, xxiii. 5–12.

I.—1. When Pilate hears the word 'Galile
he trusts that he has found a way out of l
difficulties. Galilee is in Herod's jurisdictic
let *him* try the prisoner. This will please h
at the same time.

2. Consider, again, the contrast between t
Prisoner and the judge before whom He is n
brought—JESUS, the Holy One of GOD; Herc
the adulterer and murderer! Pilate represent
the power of the world; the high-priest w
the embodiment of 'Envy, eldest-born of hel
Herod is the type of the lusts of the fle
Before all these—the world, the flesh, and t
devil—must JESUS be accused. All must c
fess His innocence, and condemn themselves
condemning Him.

3. Before Herod He is silent. The Word
GOD is ever silent before those whose hea
are blighted with lust and cruelty. Her
treats Him with mockery and coarse ridicule

a line of argument often used by the brutally-minded when brought into the presence of purity and truth.

4. It would have been to Herod's advantage to have condemned JESUS. It would have pleased Pilate, and would have pleased the Jews. But even he could not do it; he only makes one more unwilling witness to His innocence.

II. Consider how every form of wickedness is brought into the presence of JESUS, and in attempting to judge Him is judged and condemned by Him.

LXXIV.

Jesus or Barabbas?

ST. MATT. xxvii. 15–21.

I.—1. Pilate finds that it is not so easy shake off a responsibility. Again he must fa his Prisoner. He knew that it was his duty release Him; but he was beginning to be afra of the anger of the people.

2. A new solution occurs to him. He r minds them of the custom of releasing prisoner at the feast-time. He proposes th JESUS should be this prisoner. He will, ther fore, chastise Him to satisfy their thirst f blood, and will then let Him go.

3. Upon this arises a cry which exhibi human nature in the deepest degradation in which it has ever fallen: 'Not this man, b Barabbas!' The two are held out as in balance. Barabbas, a notorious robber ar murderer, and JESUS! Their choice stam the whole transaction with its true characte *What an* exhibition of concentrated envy, fals *hood, hatred* of good! They have alrea

proved JESUS innocent, they now prove themselves sinners of the deepest dye. By choosing Barabbas, they leave themselves without possibility of excuse.

II. We are lost in horror at the scene; but have we never been guilty of a like choice ourselves? Have we never joined in the cry, 'Not this Man, but Barabbas?' Yes; every time that we have wilfully chosen evil instead of good, we have taken part with the priests and Pharisees in choosing Barabbas.

LXXV.

The Crown of Thorns.

ST. MARK, xv. 16–20.

I.—1. The indignities heaped on JESUS had almost reached their height. The soldiers having maltreated Him, proceed to insult Him. 'A King, is He? Let us clothe Him as such, with a reed for a sceptre and a crown of thorns!'

2. They did not know that this crown of thorns symbolised a truth of deepest comfort. Where do we first read of thorns? Was it not the sentence on Adam, 'Cursed is the ground for thy sake; thorns and thistles it shall bring forth.' Thorns are the fruits which sin produces. And it is a crown of thorns that JESUS is wearing.

II.—1. What are the thorns which have come in with sin? Labour, sorrow, pain, death. These were the thorns He was wearing. Sinful man wove them into a crown and placed it on His head. And is it not the crown of thorns *that proclaims* Him to be our King?

2. He wears them in order that He may change them; He grafts them upon His cross, which is the Tree of Life, and so makes them no longer barren thorns, but fruit-bearing boughs. Labour now is sweet, for He has toiled; pain and sorrow are transformed into means of union with Him. Death, the most cruel of all, is become gain. St. Paul had a thorn in the flesh given him to humble him, and through it his weakness was made perfect in GOD'S strength.

3. JESUS sometimes gives us some little portion of His crown of thorns to wear. If we had some of the actual thorns which He wore, how we should treasure them! *We have them* when we have to bear pain or sorrow for His sake.

4. See how it has come true, 'Do men gather grapes of thorns?' Yes; from these thorns we may gather the fruits of the SPIRIT, which are love, joy, and peace.

LXXVI.

Envy.

ST. JOHN, xix. 4–6.

I.—1. Pilate is finding how impossible it is to go a certain distance in an evil course, and then to draw back. The failure of each device to reconcile his conscience with his cowardice only increases his difficulty. He will now try an appeal to the feelings of the multitude! He knew that it was for envy that JESUS has been thus persecuted; can he not show them that He is no longer an object of envy? For this purpose he leads Him forth bleeding from the scourging, and crowned with thorns, and exclaims, 'Behold the man!'

2. But at the sight their fury only waxes stronger. For the first time there arises the terrible cry, 'Crucify Him!' Why this blind rage? What was there now in that bowed and bleeding form, that agonised face, to envy? Much, every way; and they felt it. Envy knows and hates worth under whatever guise it may be *hidden.* They felt that even as He was He

was ten thousand times a King, more to be envied than the proudest of themselves. Their unbridled fury is but another testimony to His hidden power.

II. See in this outburst of blind rage the extreme lengths to which envy will go. Have we never felt envy of those who were better than ourselves? envy which tempted us to dislike them? If so, we have been in a measure guilty of the sin which ended in 'Crucify Him, crucify Him.'

LXXVII.

The Testimony of Conscience to a Righteous Judge.

ST. JOHN, xix. 7, 8.

I.—1. At last the Jews are compelled to state their real accusation against JESUS, that He had made Himself the SON of GOD. It was humiliating for them to be compelled to own that their former charges were unfounded. Humiliating to have to bring such a question before Pilate, the Gentile representative of a Gentile power. But he has forced it from them, and he feels its truth; he is 'the more afraid.' The judge, with all the power of the Roman Empire behind him, trembles before His prisoner!

2. And yet why should he—why should any one—be afraid of the SON of GOD? It is that conscience makes cowards of us all. The hardened sceptic, who could not believe that Truth was anywhere to be found, yet has that within him which testifies that JESUS is the SON *of GOD*, and his Judge.

II.—1. There are those who profess to believe that there is no GOD, no unseen order of things, no judgment to come; yet whose consciences bear unwilling protest to their professed creed.

2. The conscience of every man bears witness to the existence of a righteous Judge, to whom he must render an account of his life. The cleansed conscience recognises and worships Him; the guilty conscience rejects Him, yet owns Him in rejecting Him.

LXXVIII.

The Right and Wrong Use of Power.

ST. JOHN, xix. 9–11.

I.—1. PILATE now thinks to overawe JESUS by reminding Him that he has power to do what he wills with Him. This threat shows how far Pilate was from being 'of the truth.' He regarded the power entrusted to him as a weapon which he might use as he pleased. Hence our LORD replies that power is a gift from above, and has its responsibilities as well as its privileges.

2. See how He in all His words rises superior to His judge. He is not afraid to rebuke where rebuke is called for; yet, in pity towards him, He would let him know that he is not so guilty as the chief priests who had so grossly misused the position to which they had been called, and who without cause had delivered Him into Pilate's hands, and so forced him to judge Him.

3. Notice our LORD'S marvellously just and *discriminating* judgment. He rebukes Pilate

for his immoral notion that might was right, and yet he points out where there is a greater sin. Pilate's injustice does not make Him unjust.

II.—1. Consider how JESUS here teaches us that every power entrusted to us, whether it is great or small, is 'from above.' The power of parent over child, of teacher over scholar, of master over servant, of elder over younger, of the clever over the ignorant, is 'from above,' and is entrusted to its possessor to use as GOD uses His power, not for self-aggrandisement, but for the promotion of right and the benefit of others.

2. Let us examine ourselves as to our use of the power which may have been entrusted to us 'from above,' remembering that He Who is the just and perfect Judge will ask from us an account of this also.

LXXIX.

Fear of the World's Opinion condemns Jesus to be Crucified.

ST. JOHN, xix. 12–16. ST. MATT. xxvii. 24, 25.

I. The last saying of JESUS makes Pilate more than ever convinced of His innocence. Again he seeks to release Him. But the Jews will not be baffled. All their charges have broken down they now appeal to threats; they will report Pilate to Cæsar. All pretence of justice is now abandoned; it is simply a cry for vengeance; they will have blood, come what may. This cry changes the whole aspect of affairs. Pilate has braved the Jews thus far, but he dare not brave the wrath of Cæsar. He too throws off all judicial fairness; having pronounced JESUS not guilty, he proceeds to condemn Him to death. In utter cowardice, he tries to rid himself, by an empty protest, of the responsibility of his own actions. Imagine that miserable lie, 'I am innocent of the blood *of this* just person,' spoken in the silent presence *of the Truth* Himself. Pilate delivers JESUS to

be crucified, and delivers himself to the lasting execration of the Christian world.

II. It was fear of what Cæsar might think that led Pilate thus to violate his conscience. What Cæsar was to Pilate, a certain circle of people whom we call 'the world,' are to us. Have we never been influenced by the thought of what 'the world' would say, rather than by what we felt would be right and true? Whenever such a fear of public opinion has caused us to violate our conscience, we have been guilty, in a measure, of delivering JESUS to be crucified.

LXXX.

'Weep not for Me.'

ST. LUKE, xxiii. 27–31.

I.—1. The trial is over, and JESUS is forc
onwards to the cross amidst a crowd who ins
and mock Him. Yet there are some who se
to sympathise. Weeping women! But He b
them weep not for Him. He knows that th
tears express only a surface emotion which
pass off when He is out of sight. He wo
teach them that there is but one real cause
tears, and that is, not *suffering*, but *sin*.

2. He speaks of Himself as 'the green tre
although He was moving on to the cross
death, yet in Him was life, the only life wor
of the name, life towards GOD. If such was
fate of the Innocent One, what must be the
of 'the dry,' those in whom this life had be
quenched, and who were fit only for the bu
ing? Weep for them.

II.—1. In meditating upon the passion
JESUS, ever remember His warning, 'Weep

for Me, but for yourselves.' He does not seek for tears at the thought of His sufferings; these may be superficial and soon pass away, but He seeks for deep-seated sorrow for sin, the cause of all sufferings; and for the misery which is ever the accompaniment of sin. This is the mourning that is blessed, the sorrow that is turned to joy.

2. 'He that goeth on his way weeping and *beareth forth good seed*, shall doubtless come again with joy.'

LXXXI.

Bearing the Cross after Jesus.

ST. MARK, xv. 21.

I.—1. It is probable that JESUS was unable, through physical weakness, to carry His cross. Hence the necessity of finding some one to carry it for Him. A proof that JESUS felt bodily weakness and infirmity. He that gave power to the paralytic to carry his bed is now unable to carry His own cross.

2. We know not whether Simon was a disciple; at any rate he was called to do literally, that which Christ bids all His disciples do spiritually, bear His cross after Him.

II.—1. To bear the cross would seem a work of shame, but not when He had carried it first. To suffer any contradiction to our wills is most painful to our natural selves, but it is blessed if it is borne in union with the great Cross-bearer.

2. *The* cross-bearing of Simon gave some *relief to the* suffering JESUS. If we bear our cross

bravely and humbly, may it not in some way make His cross lighter?

3. Simon was known as the father of two Christians. It may be that his cross-bearing bore good fruit in his own family. It may be that if we too bear the cross after JESUS, our self-sacrifice may reproduce itself in the lives of those whom we love.

4. Learn, therefore, to bear the cross for JESUS' sake and for others' sake.

LXXXII.

The King of the Jews.

ST. JOHN, xix. 19–22.

I.—1. This title was placed upon the cross by Pilate for the purpose of bringing ridicule upon the Jews. No doubt he felt very angry at the way in which they had compelled him to yield to their will against his better judgment, and he thus revenges himself upon them.

2. The Jews repudiate the king whom he has forced upon them. If their hearts, and his, had but been open to the truth, they would have seen that the Jewish nation never had a greater glory bestowed upon it than when he thus declared JESUS to be its king. Just as Caiaphas, the representative of the ancient priesthood, was inspired to pronounce our LORD to be the one Sacrifice for sin (St. John, xi. 50–52), so Pilate, the representative of the kingdoms of the earth, declares Him to be truly King.

3. By writing the title in Greek and Latin as *well as in* Hebrew, he seems to announce that He *has a wider* kingdom than the Jewish race, even

the whole of mankind. The Hebrew, Greek, and Latin nations represent the great elements of religion, wisdom, and law, which make up what is called modern European civilization; and the King of them all is JESUS of Nazareth the Jew.

4. Surely no nation has ever received such homage from its rivals as is contained in this mocking title of Pilate, which the blinded chief priests rejected.

II. Let every Christian make it a matter of prayer, (as we are especially instructed on Good Friday,) that those of GOD'S ancient people who are still rejecting the Gospel of His SON, may be led to see that the truest glory of their nation is that JESUS of Nazareth is the King of the Jews.

LXXXIII.

The Garments of Jesus.

St. John, xix. 23, 24.

I.—1. In order that we may learn how utterly bereft of all earthly surroundings Jesus had become for our sake, we are told that the soldiers divided among themselves even His garments, leaving Him stripped of every possession.

2. Again, are they in their ignorance, symbolizing a truth of much comfort and instruction. Through the cross His garments are parted amongst sinners! Adam in shame hid himself, that his nakedness might not be seen, and God clothed him. In order that our spiritual nakedness may be covered, Jesus surrenders all outward glory upon the cross so that He may clothe us with His righteousness.

II.—1. Notice that the garments are of two kinds; the outer can be distributed, some to one, some to another; but there is an inner vesture *which is seam*less, this must remain undivided, or

it is valueless. The gifts and graces which JESUS possessed may be divided amongst His followers; one may have a greater share of His courage, another of His gentleness, another of His wisdom; but His inner vesture, His spirit of obedience to His Father's will, each disciple must possess whole and undivided, for it is of one piece, woven from the top throughout.

2. 'O Lord JESUS, clothe us with the garments of Thy righteousness which is ours through Thy cross, especially with that inner garment of submission to our FATHER'S will, which must be without seam, perfect, entire, indivisible.'

LXXXIV.

The Mocking of the Cross.

St. Matt. xxvii. 39–43.

I.—1. See how Reason mocks at Love! It cannot understand it. It believes only in visible force, it cannot comprehend the strength of self-sacrifice.

2. Yet in its mocking it bears unconscious testimony to the worth of Love: 'He saved others:' 'He trusted in God:' 'He said I am the Son of God.' It does not see that it is just because He saved others that He cannot save Himself; just because He *is* the Son of God that He is on the cross. For the cross is the Father's will, He would be no true Son if He were to come down from the cross as His mockers suggest.

II.—1. It may be that we are sometimes mocked and ridiculed on account of our faith. When people see self-devotion and a high sense *of what is* right, they will often cry, 'Come *down from the* cross.' If we are ever thus ridi-

culed, let us unite ourselves with JESUS on the cross, Who bore such mockery in patience and silence.

2. But let us see that we are being ridiculed because we are *crucified with Christ*, not merely because we have adopted a particular set of opinions. Do our mockers say of us, 'He saved others,' 'He trusted in GOD'? Only so are we sharing in the mockery of the cross.

LXXXV.

Salvation through the Cross is better than Salvation from the Cross.

ST. LUKE, xxiii. 39–43.

I.—1. Both these men who suffered with JESUS were classed together as malefactors. And yet the difference between them is immeasurable. The estimate which is commonly formed of people is often most mistaken. There are many noble impulses in those who seem to us the outcasts of society, which are being wasted and crushed from adverse circumstances.

2. It is the having to bear the cross which brings out the essential difference between these two men. The one desires only to escape. He wishes to be saved, 'Lord, save thyself and us;' but his idea of being saved is, being delivered from punishment. He does not care to be saved from his sins. The other sees that the cross is his due: 'We suffer justly;' he will accept it, he does not seek to be saved from it, but for something better: 'Lord, remember me.' He could not have had a very clear notion as to *the* nature of the kingdom of JESUS. But he *must have* felt that it would be a kingdom of

holiness, for 'this man hath done nothing amiss.' It was holiness he wanted, he would endure the cross if he could only attain to that. He was among the few who could see that a man's happiness does not depend upon what he *possesses*, but upon what he *is*. No wonder that to this thief were spoken words of assurance stronger than any spoken before: 'Verily, to-day,—with Me,—in Paradise.'

II.—1. We all have to be on the cross with JESUS. The cross comes in our daily lives, in little homely circumstances. Every trial of life, however small,is part of the cross of JESUS. But we may find ourselves on the cross and yet be only as the impenitent thief. Many only pray when they are in trouble, and then their prayer is, 'LORD, take it away.' This is not the true way to bear the cross.

2. If you would learn to bear it, learn of Him Who taught the penitent thief. His first lesson was, 'We suffer justly;' next, he learned, 'This Man hath done nothing amiss;' and that led him to believe in a kingdom of holiness, into which he might enter through the cross.

3. Accept the cross as he did, seek not to be saved *from it*, but *through it*, and you will find it to be the tree of life.

LXXXVI.

The Death of the God-man.

ST. MATT. xxvii. 50–53. ST. LUKE, xxiii. 44, 45.

I. The end has come. The powers of evil have accomplished their object, JESUS is dead. The Sinless Son of Man has endured the penalty of sin. The eternal SON of GOD has experienced that which is in itself a token of alienation from GOD. No wonder that inanimate creation acknowledges the mystery, and acknowledges Him by Whom all things were made. No wonder that at the entrance of such a One into the realms of Death, Death itself is conquered and yields up its prey. No wonder also that the veil of the Temple is rent in twain, now that a New and Living Way to the FATHER is open to all believers through the death of the Perfect Son.

II. Meditate on the death of JESUS, not merely as a past fact, but in the light cast *upon it* by the saying of St. Paul, 'If One died *for all then* were all dead' (2 COR. v. 14). It is

the death of the Representative Man, our Second Adam. By His death all mankind passes out of its old condition and enters into a new relationship towards GOD. We have been baptized into His death, and through our union with Him in His death we are called upon to die to sin and to live to righteousness.

LXXXVII.

The Power exercised by the Cross.

ST. LUKE, xxiii. 47–49.

I. We have seen how the death of JESU affected physical nature; see here, how it begir to affect human nature.

1. It affects the centurion; probably a ma who had witnessed much suffering and bloo shed, the very type of a hard, Roman soldier but this is a sight to touch even him. Th silent suffering and entire self-surrender of th Holy One convert him. 'Truly this was th SON of GOD.' Is not this cry of his the firs fruit of the conversion of the Gentiles which ha been wrought by the Cross?

2. The people, the Jews, smite their breast As the Cross was to prove the conversion of th Gentiles, so also was it to prove the confusio of the Jews. Already are they beginning t lament the success of their own policy; the little think how terrible a curse it is about t *bring upon* their nation.

3. *The friends* of JESUS are silent (v. 49

They are overwhelmed with sorrow at the sight which they are beholding: they know not yet how near that sorrow is to joy.

II. We, too, have been 'beholding these things.' In what way has the contemplation of the Cross affected us? for it must affect us in some way. If we have hitherto been, like the centurion, or like the Jews, alienated from JESUS, it must lead either to our conversion or to our confusion. If we are already among 'His acquaintance,' although we still behold these things 'afar off,' we shall be filled with a deeper sense of our own unworthiness, and of the greatness of Redeeming Love.

LXXXVIII.

The Broken Heart.

ST. JOHN, xix. 31–37.

I.—1. It has been thought that the flow of blood and water from the pierced side of JESUS betokens that His death was caused at last by an actual broken heart. There is much beauty in this thought if it was so. He had felt, in the perfection of His own human nature, what man might be, and He was witnessing what man had actually become; in agony at the contrast His heart breaks with grief. What a triumph of the spiritual over the physical!

2. It has also been generally agreed that the water and the blood typify the two great Sacraments of the Gospel, Baptism and Holy Communion, by which we are brought into spiritual union with Him. As the water which flowed from the rock in the wilderness followed the children of Israel throughout their journeyings, so this life-giving Stream from the Heart of JESUS *flows* ever on to refresh and strengthen parched *human* nature.

II.—1. It was grief at the exceeding sinfulness of men that wrought the death of JESUS. Should not this make us feel the full horror of sin? The sight of JESUS grieving over our sins touches us more keenly than the thought of His anger.

2. The Sacraments of the Gospel proceed from the broken Heart of JESUS. We must approach them with that sense of the hatefulness of sin which caused that Heart to break.

3. Of us it is written, 'They shall look on Him Whom they pierced.' How often have we pierced Him in the tenderest feelings of His Heart by our carelessness, lukewarmness, or wilful sin!

LXXXIX.–XCVI.

The Seven Words from the Cross.

LXXXIX. (Introductory).

The Cross the Tree of Life.

St. John, xix. 17, 18.

I.—1. 'He became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross.' The life-long sacrifice of willing obedience finds its completion in the outstretched arms on Calvary. 'They crucified Him;' let the simple description of the Evangelist suffice for an event which is unparalleled. Although 'they crucified Him,' yet has He not said, 'No man taketh My life from Me, I lay it down of Myself' (St. John, x. 18)? It was His own Will that was being nailed to the cross and was being laid a living sacrifice at His Father's footstool. It is upon this willing obedience that He would *have us* meditate, rather than upon His bodily *sufferings*, and upon the fruits of that obedience.

'As by one man's disobedience many were made sinners, so by the obedience of One shall many be made righteous' (Rom. v. 19).

2. Seen with the natural eye the Cross is the tree of death; the spiritual eye perceives it to be the Tree of Life. Let us contemplate the Cross as the Tree of Life through the sacrifice of Him Who hangs thereon. Let us listen to His words which are the fruits of that Tree; we shall find them to be full of Life and of Healing. The Life which we shall find in them is our true life in GOD, which was lost in Adam, and which is now restored in CHRIST JESUS. Now is being made the perfect atonement for the sin of man; now is the prince of this world being cast out; now are all the evils which came upon man through the fall, being taken away.

II. Contemplate the obedience unto death, even the death of the Cross.

XC.

The Advocate with the Father.

ST. LUKE, xxiii. 34.

I. Behold the first-fruits of the Cross! 'We have an Advocate with the FATHER, JESUS CHRIST the Righteous.' The first-fruit of the fall was guilt, alienation from GOD; through the Cross we have Him Who is the propitiation for our sins, through Him we are restored to the FATHER. Satan seeks to lead us away from GOD by tempting us to doubt His love: JESUS wins us back by His cry 'FATHER, forgive.' By our spiritual union with Him, we too, may join Him in that cry, and through Him there is forgiveness.

II. 'They know not what they do;' such is His plea for His murderers; such is His plea for all. Are there any who know all that they are doing when they sin? Does not all sin proceed from spiritual blindness, from not *knowing* the things which belong to our peace? *Does any* one know how far his own sin may

reach? how endless may be its results? Does any one fully recognise how every sin mars the perfection of GOD's universe? how the smallest thing done wrong can only be set right by GOD? In a limited sense we *do* know what we are doing when we sin deliberately, but in the wider sense we know not, and cannot know, what we do. In order that we may be delivered from the unknown terror of a condition of sin, through the Cross we have an Advocate with the FATHER. Adam knew not what he did when he ate of the forbidden fruit, he knew not all the misery that would follow. Poor deluded creatures that we are! we have involved ourselves in terrible consequences through our own rashness; we need to be saved from the results of our own folly. Through the Cross we are saved, for there is One ever crying 'FATHER, forgive!'

XCI.

Paradise Regained.

ST. LUKE, xxiii. 42, 43.

I.—1. Mark the perfect confidence with which JESUS speaks. Dying in agony, stripped of every earthly possession, He can yet promise a kingdom.

2. To whom does He make this promise? To His mother or His disciples? No; but to a thief put to death for his crimes. JESUS takes no heed of the raging cries and blasphemies which were torturing His ears: there is one cry that thrills through Him; a simple cry of faith. Nothing reaches Him so quickly as the prayer of the penitent. This thief alone comforted Him upon the Cross; His mother could only add to His agonies, His disciples had forsaken Him; but JESUS is never left without witness, in the darkest hour of the Cross there comes out this thief to confess His power.

3. How marvellous the faith of this thief! *How great* the patience and humility of his *prayer, simply,* 'Lord, remember me!' How

GOD-like the answer! JESUS always gives more than we desire or deserve, 'To-day—with Me—in Paradise.'

II.—1. The first-fruit of Adam's sin was a guilty conscience; this is removed by the first word from the Cross 'FATHER, forgive.' A second part of Adam's penalty was his expulsion from Paradise. This second word from the Cross tells us that Paradise is restored: restored to those who in perfect faith look to the crucified JESUS to remember them. Not now an earthly paradise, a mere garden of delights; but a Paradise beyond the grave, a better country, that is a heavenly. We know not where or what this Paradise is. It is with JESUS: that is enough. It is the rest of the soul, that rest which is for all who through faith in Him bear their cross after Him.

2. JESUS has been out into the wilderness to conquer for us the enemy who drove us out of Paradise, and through His victory Paradise is regained; the 'wilderness is made like Eden, and the desert like the garden of the LORD' (Isa. li. 3).

XCII.

Human Love sanctified by the Cross.

ST. JOHN, xix. 25–27.

I. The words of JESUS to the penitent thief could only have come from One who is true GOD; those to His mother could only come from One who is true Man. They are all human. His heart is filled with compassion at the sight of her anguish, He will spare her any further sight of His suffering, He will entreat His loved disciple to lead her away. He can no longer fulfil towards her His duty as a son; true that He will rise again, but not to ordinary human life; this is His death-bed to that, and before He dies He must provide for her. He had provided a home in the other world for the thief, He will provide a home for His mother in this world as long as she has need of it. JESUS provides for His own, if they will but trust Him, in this life as well as in the next.

II.—1. See how by this care for His mothe *JESUS sanctifies* human love. It finds a plac *in His thoughts* even when He is upon t

Cross; He shows Himself subject to it, and thus sanctions it and sanctifies it.

2. How much is human life indebted to human love! How powerful is the influence of that unselfish drawing towards our fellow-creatures which is implanted in the heart of man! What a charm it casts over life! Is it wrong? Nay, it has the stamp of the Cross upon it. One object of His incarnation was that He might feel for us as a Brother.

3. Adam's fall introduced distrust, envy, hatred, among mankind. He sought to excuse his sin by placing it upon his wife; Cain cried, 'Am I my brother's keeper?' JESUS reverses all this; He says to us of every one, 'Behold thy son: behold thy mother.' 'For whosoever shall do the will of My Father, the same is My brother, and sister, and mother.'

4. But learn that human love must be sanctified by the Cross, it must be in CHRIST. This makes it holy, saves it from selfishness, makes it eternal. This is sometimes the reason why those whom we love best are called away from us: it is because we are loving them with a selfish love, and that we may learn to love them *in* CHRIST. Selfish love must end with the grave: love in CHRIST is eternal.

XCIII.

Spiritual Desolation transfigured by the Cross.

ST. MATT. xxvii. 46.

I.—1. We feel that we are here witnessing the culmination of the Divine sacrifice, the height of Divine agony; it is the cup of Gethsemane returning in its bitterest form. If we could measure this cry we could measure Divine Love, for we could measure the sacrifice which Love was willing to offer for our sake. But we cannot measure it; we can but touch the hem of His garment, there is healing even in that.

2. It was the near approach of death that wrung this cry from the lips of JESUS. He had anticipated death, He is now beginning to experience it. Death was to Him the outward visible sign of the alienation of man from GOD; He, as man, tastes death for every man, and the realisation of this is the realisation of the fallen condition of that human nature which He (while *Him*self sinless) had assumed. The cry is the *utterance of* His perfect sympathy with us even

in our deepest humiliation, the sense that we are forsaken by GOD.

II.—1. Are not mental and spiritual sorrows the profoundest of all the afflictions which afflict mankind? Loneliness, bereavement, disappointment, mental anxiety, grief for the sins of those we love, the sense of being misunderstood, the separation caused by difference of opinion; are not these among the bitterest fruits of our fallen condition? Most terrible of all, the feeling that GOD has forgotten us, that our prayers are unanswered, that our faith is unavailing, that our efforts are useless.

2. Most wonderful of all mysteries! The incarnate SON of GOD tasted even these for our sake! They are ours, and therefore they are His. They are all summed up in the cry, 'My GOD, My GOD, why hast Thou forsaken Me!' By bearing them He has transfigured them, so that they are no longer tokens of *alienation from* GOD, but signs of our *oneness with* Him Who has taken the Manhood into GOD.

XCIV.

The Bodily Sufferings of Jesus.

St. John, xix. 28.

I. This cry is the utterance of the bodily anguish which Jesus was suffering. This is the only word He ever spoke which expressed that anguish. He did not wish us to dwell much upon His bodily pains, He never ranked such among the greater evils of life. Even now He expresses them in the briefest possible terms, 'I thirst.' It is not that His patience is exhausted, nor that His agony at this moment is greater than He can bear, but for our sakes He utters this bitter cry, that the scripture may be fulfilled; that we may learn how true and real His bodily sufferings were. We are so ready to complain of the least pain, that if it had not been for this one cry, we might have been tempted to imagine from His silence, that bodily pain was nothing to Him, that His divine nature lifted Him above it. But this word 'I thirst,' makes this thought *impossible;* and in that simple word He opens *to us the secret* anguish of His life, revealing to

us how He was sharing in all human infirmities, in pain, in weariness, in cold, in hunger.

II. For our sakes He speaks it. He would teach us that as the cross has sanctified human love and transfigured spiritual sorrow, so also has it transfigured physical pain. Pain is in itself grievous, but the Tree of Life has been cast into its bitter waters, and has bestowed upon them a healing power. Thus we may learn to welcome the aching head, the fevered pulse, sleepless nights, gnawing pain, exhausted energies. They formed part of the cross of JESUS, through that cross He has raised them, so that they are no longer grievous but joyous, being means of union with Himself.

XCV.

'It is Finished.'

ST. JOHN, xix. 30.

I.—1. Finished the life of patient suffering, the humiliation of wearing the likeness of sinful flesh! Finished the FATHER'S work and the FATHER'S will! 'Obedient *unto death.*' True, that there still remain the resurrection, the ascension, the outpouring of His SPIRIT upon men, but these are works of triumph; His work of sacrifice is finished.

2. Yet how can He say 'It is finished,' when the results of His life, as He hangs upon the cross, seem to be nothing? He teaches us by this cry that to do GOD'S will is to finish His work, that it is obedience, rather than success, which He looks for, that apparent defeat is often the truest victory, that the work which seems hopeless and purposeless may have within it a rich store of fruit for the future.

II.—1. See how by this word JESUS rolls off *the great* curse of fruitless labour which came

in with Adam's sin. How often we have to toil with but little result: He bore this same disappointment in order that we may learn that no labour is in vain in the LORD.

2. There is still more precious fruit to be gathered from this word. How we toil and labour after a spiritual life, and yet do not find it! Have we realised the depth of 'It is finished?' It is in Him! He has worked it out for us, and He is ready to work it out in us if we will but rest from merely human efforts and simply surrender ourselves to Him. If our life is bound up in His, there is a perfection in Him which covers all our imperfections, and a transforming power which will make itself perfect in our weakness. Learn to cease from self and to rest in Him.

XCVI.

'O Death! where is thy sting?'

ST. LUKE, xxiii. 46.

I.—1. See how 'It is finished,' restores
SON to perfect communion with the FATH
No longer 'Why hast thou forsaken Me?'
'Into Thy hands I commend My spirit.'
finish GOD's work is to commend our spirits
Him.

2. Such are the dying words of JESUS. Le
from Him what death is, and how we can m
it. Death is the crowning result of Adam's fa
to the natural man it is all gloom, horr
dread; in CHRIST it is freedom, life, a cc
mending of the spirit to the FATHER of Spir
The cross would be no tree of life if it still l
us overshadowed by the unsolved mystery
death. But thanks be to GOD Who giveth us
victory through our Lord JESUS CHRIST.
Him we learn the truth of that hard saying
St. Paul, 'To die is gain.' This last word fr
the cross completes that which the first initiat
perfect access to our FATHER in life and
death.

II.—1. Consider how terrible death has seemed since Adam and Eve looked upon the dead Abel! There is hardly any one who has not experienced the agonising blank which is caused by the death of some loved one. The Cross has robbed death of its sting, for through the Cross it has become the commending of a departing spirit into the FATHER'S hands, which is the one place of safety, the one unchangeable. All human spirits if they are united with the Spirit of JESUS pass with His into the FATHER'S care. Could we or they desire anything better?

2. Just as far as we are daily commending our spirits, through the indwelling Divine SPIRIT, into our FATHER'S hands, knowing that He alone is their true Guardian and Guide, just so far, when the hour of death draws near, shall we be able to render them up to Him, in perfect confidence that no torment can there touch them, no temptation pluck them out of His hands.

XCVII.

'With the Rich in His Death.'

ST. JOHN, xix. 38–42.

I.—1. See how the Spirit of JESUS is still working, although His Body is lifeless. He wins souls even in death.

2. Probably Joseph was not present at the meeting of the council which condemned our Lord. He will do what he can for Him now. As he moves towards the cross, thinking that he is alone in his sympathy for the Crucified, he is joined by another of the same council, Nicodemus. He is not alone, then, after all. Nicodemus, who at first believed only in miracles, has risen now to believe in the cross.

3. Notice, that the two who were specially attracted to JESUS when He was dead were men of position in the world, rich men; almost the only rich men who ever ministered to Him. It was not any display of power or possessions *which won* them, but utter helplessness and *poverty.*

II.—1. Learn that in the most unlikely places good may be working, although we know it not. Human nature has hardly ever reached a lower depth than in this Jewish council, yet it contained a Joseph and a Nicodemus. Probably neither knew what was in the mind of the other until the cross drew them together, by drawing them to itself. We may imagine that we are alone amidst a number of ungodly associates; there may be others among them who feel as we do, but lack courage to make it known.

2. Nothing would seem less likely than that JESUS should win rich and influential men to believe in Him, when His work seemed to be cut short by His death. Learn that souls are won, not so much by our laying ourselves out to win them, as by simple obedience to our FATHER'S will.

XCVIII.

The Blindness of those who will not See.

ST. MATT. xxvii. 62–66.

I.—1. See the restlessness of the enemies o JESUS while He is lying peacefully in the tomb Why should they fear Him now? Why shoul Pilate again be disturbed about this Man? I he never to be free from Him? No, Pilate never!

2. Unbelief is always restless. It fancie that it has conquered Faith, but it has ever a uneasy suspicion lest it should rise again.

3. Unbelief is always feeble in its devices It thinks to prevent the resurrection of th Lord of Life by a sealed stone and a fe soldiers! It sometimes professes to have over thrown the faith of centuries by the discover of a fancied discrepancy between two texts o Scripture, or by a superficial objection to som Christian doctrine!

4. See how at the end of our Lord's passio *there is exactly* the same belief in huma *scheming, as opposed* to Divine order, whic

we saw at the beginning (No. 44). The enemies of JESUS have been present at His trial and at His cross, and yet have learned nothing; they are only the more bitter against Him, and the more feeble in their efforts to defeat Him.

II. Now that we too have followed the story of His cross and passion, have we learned the one great lesson which every scene in that story teaches? The lesson that confidence in a FATHER'S love, and obedience to a FATHER'S will, is the only way of peace; that the cross is the truest victory, for it is the victory over every form of self-will; that it is through the cross alone that man can die to self and rise again to a new and purified life.

XCIX.

'Joy cometh in the morning.'

ST. MARK, xvi. 1–7. ST. MATT. xxviii. 9, 10.

I.—1. As these women drew near to the sepulchre, a difficulty presents itself to their minds; how can they roll away the stone from the door? But they are not to be turned back by difficulties; they go on in hope and confidence, and they found that the stone *was* rolled away. The resurrection of JESUS had done that.

2. Not only do they find the stone rolled away, but they find that the grave of JESUS has become the dwelling-place of angels, who testify to them that He is risen.

3. As they hasten onwards, bearing the joyful news, JESUS Himself meets them with the greeting, 'All hail!' These are the first words which come to us from beyond the grave! How they breathe companionship! how they rob the grave of its sting! 'All hail!' And again, 'Be not afraid; go tell *My brethren!*' He had *never* used this title before. He would have *them learn that*, although risen now above the

conditions of natural life, He is still their elder Brother, still wearing their own human nature.

II.—1. As we contemplate the risen JESUS do we not feel that there is a stone which separates us from Him? The more we long to rise with Him, the more we feel the presence of our old evil nature holding us back. 'Who shall roll us away the stone?' Believe in the power of the risen JESUS, and we shall find that it *is* rolled away. His Resurrection has rolled away every stone which is keeping His people from Him.

3. We shall find also that His grave, in which our old nature has been buried with Him, is full of angels, who declare unto us His resurrection.

3. As we go forth to bear witness that He is risen indeed, He Himself will meet us with, 'All hail!' In that word we shall learn that although we have 'forsaken Him and fled,' He is not ashamed to call us brethren. He has been made perfect through sufferings, that He may bring many sons to glory. He is 'the first-begotten from the dead,' 'the first-born of many brethren.' In His resurrection we see our own victory over sin, and our own eternal acceptance in Him.

C.

Love and Penitence at the Tomb of Jesus.

ST. JOHN, XX. 1–10.

I.—1. Thus is the first announcement of the empty tomb made to the disciples; to St. John, whom our Lord had chosen to care for His bereaved mother: to St. Peter, who had denied Him.

2. Penitence has restored Peter to the communion of saints. Despair, like Judas, in vain seeks consolation from the partners of its guilt (St. Matt. xxvii. 3); penitence, like Peter, finds a refuge and a welcome in the household of faith.

3. Penitence and love hasten together to the sepulchre of their Lord. Love outruns penitence, it is quicker in its apprehensions; yet penitence is often the bolder in its search for a Saviour, it *must* discover whether He is alive or dead. And yet love, in its gentle confidence, is the quicker to believe: it has a less *clouded spiritual* sense. It is *John* who saw *and believed; Peter* needs a special vision of

the risen Pardoner before he can believe in so great a blessing.

II.—1. Our Lord appeared thrice on the morning of Easter Day. We do not know the exact order of these appearances. (1) To the women (St. Matt. xxviii. 9); (2) to St. Mary Magdalene (St. John, xx. 14); and (3) to Simon Peter (see St. Luke, xxiv. 34, and 1 Cor. xv. 5.) Of the two former of these appearances we have a detailed account; of what took place when He appeared to Peter we are told nothing. Must not the meeting of JESUS with the penitent sinner ever take place in secret, and ever be shrouded in silence? Known only to Him Who forgives, and to him who is forgiven, are the chastened joys of that meeting.

2. We read of no special manifestation of the risen JESUS granted to St. John or to the Blessed Virgin. He will sometimes leave those who love Him best without those sensible proofs of His presence which He vouchsafes to returning penitents.

CI.

'He rose again for our justification.'

ST. JOHN, xx. 11–18.

I.—1. The mistake of Mary Magdalene was not so great, after all. Is He not the Gardener? The Gardener of the garden of the LORD, which Adam had neglected; the Gardener of graves from which He is to raise new fruit for His FATHER'S garner.

2. It was a human sorrow with which she had been grieving for Him; it is a human love with which she still loves Him. She must learn that He is no longer under the conditions of natural human life; that these manifestations of Himself after His resurrection were not to be the permanent form in which He was to be known henceforth among men; but that He is to ascend again to His FATHER, and that, in that ascended and glorified life, He will still dwell among men by His SPIRIT; that then they can touch Him and cling to Him, not by any carnal or material touching of His Body, but by an *inward* and spiritual communion of His SPIRIT *with theirs.*

II.—1. Although He has passed out of the natural conditions of human life, and has ascended into Heaven, He does not cease to be one of us. On the contrary, His resurrection and ascension seem to unite us more closely to Him. Before His crucifixion He announced to His disciples that He was going to His FATHER (St. John, xvi. 28); now that He, in our nature, has conquered sin and death for us, His FATHER has become ours also. His resurrection is ours. The FATHER, Who is His FATHER and His GOD in a high and special sense, is our FATHER and our GOD in Him.

2. See how, in this interview with Mary Magdalene, JESUS transfigures human sorrow and human devotion, lifting them up from the earthly to the heavenly, leading her from her weeping at the empty sepulchre to a realisation of the acceptance with GOD which comes through His ascended Humanity. May He so consecrate all our sorrows, that in them we may learn the joy that proceeds from knowing that through His precious death and glorious resurrection, His FATHER is our FATHER, His GOD our GOD.

CII.

St. Matthias.

ACTS, i. 15–26.

I. Consider the work to which Matthias was called, and the method by which he was chosen.

1. The work was to bear witness to the resurrection of JESUS; and not only to His resurrection, but to His life of conflict also; he must be one who 'has companied with us all the time that the Lord JESUS went in and out among us, beginning from the baptism of John.' This was the first idea which the Apostles had formed of their office. They did not yet know how the SPIRIT of CHRIST was to be given to them, in order that they might bear that witness, not only from what their eyes had seen, but from His living presence within them. But their conception was the true one; the office of the Church is to bear witness that CHRIST is risen indeed; for it is His Body, the outward manifestation of His SPIRIT.

2. *To this work* Matthias must have an *outward and an inward* call. The other Apostle

could testify to the fact that he was outwardly qualified to bear witness to the resurrection. But they could not read his heart, they could not know whether the inward witness was there; that must be decided by Him Who had chosen them; they leave the matter in His hands: 'Lord, show whether of these two Thou hast chosen.' What faith they must have had in His presence that they could thus speak to Him as naturally as if they still beheld Him in their midst!

II.—1. All Christians are called upon in their degree to witness to the death and resurrection of JESUS. Every one has the outward qualification to bear such witness, for every Christian, by the fact of his baptism, testifies that CHRIST died and is risen again: but to bear that witness effectually needs an inner call, for it must proceed from the resurrection-life of JESUS working within us. Who has, and who has not, this inner call, is known to GOD only.

2. Learn from the example of the Apostles that it is not for us to decide whom the LORD has chosen, and whom He has not; leave it to Him Who knoweth the hearts of all men.

CIII.

The Annunciation.

ST. LUKE, i. 26–38.

I.—1. The fulness of time has come. GOD will send forth His SON, born of a woman. He must choose a human instrument; He ever works through the creatures which He has made. He must choose one who is humble, for it is only the humble who have faith; and for such a high work there must be perfect faith and perfect self-surrender. He finds Mary, the Virgin of Nazareth. She has been formed by His SPIRIT a fitting instrument for His will. When once she recognises that it is GOD Who is thus visiting her, she knows neither doubts nor fears: 'Behold the handmaid of the Lord, be it unto me according to thy word.'

2. See in this saying the human echo of the Divine WORD, 'Lo, I come to do Thy will, O GOD.' There must ever be the response of the human heart, in order that GOD may work His blessed way. He can do no mighty works where there is unbelief.

II. Is there not a true sense in which CHRIST must be born in each one of us, spiritually, not physically? And in order that He may be born in us, we must, like Mary, give our wills into GOD'S hands; when we do this, He possesses us wholly, and we are filled with Him. As long as our wills are not surrendered to Him, so long are they in bondage, 'so that we cannot do the thing that we would;' when we have given them over to GOD, they are free.

> 'Our wills are ours, we know not how;
> Our wills are ours, to make them Thine.'

Just as far as we make them His, just so far shall we find them to be our own. Just so far as we can say, 'Be it unto me according to Thy word,' just so far shall we find that 'where the SPIRIT of the LORD is, there is liberty.'

CIV.

St. Mark.

ST. MARK, iv. 26–29.

I.—1. This is one of the very few parables recorded by St. Mark, and it is recorded by him alone. Was it that there was something in its teaching which came home with special force to himself, and which led him to include it in his Gospel? We know that on one occasion he had failed in perseverance, and had for a while turned his back upon his Master's work. (Acts, xiii. 13). Not improbably, he was impatient, because disappointed at the slow growth of the kingdom. In after years he would be peculiarly sensitive to the teaching of this parable, which foretold the gradual and silent nature of GOD'S working.

2. No doubt it was St. Peter who reported this parable to him. St. Mark was 'his son' in the faith (1 Pet. v. 13); it is generally believed that he assisted him in the compilation of this *Gospel.* Is it not a parable that must have *come home to* St. Peter also? Had not he

fallen through want of patience and confidence? In the strength of his own conversion he can now strengthen his wavering and impatient brother.

II.—1. The lesson of the parable is on its surface. The growth of the Kingdom of Heaven is as the growth of seed sown. It is not according to our anxious haste, but according to the law of its own development. The husbandman is patient, because he is confident. He knows in Whom he is trusting.

2. Learn that both patience and confidence are most necessary in the growth of the spiritual life. Be not impatient with yourself, or with others, because the harvest does not immediately succeed the seed sown. '*First* the blade, *then* the ear.'

3. Have confidence that spiritual life is GOD'S work, not yours. His work is self-developing; it is a seed which must bring forth fruit after its own kind.

4. Trust Him that, when the fruit is brought forth, *immediately* He putteth in the sickle.

INDEX

TO THE PASSAGES OF HOLY SCRIPTURE WHICH FORM THE SUBJECT-MATTER OF THE MEDITATIONS.

		NO.	PAGE
St. Matt. iv.	1, 2	1	2
	3, 4	2	4
	5–7	3	6
	8–10	4	8
	11	5	10
xvi.	21–23	6	12
	24–28	7	14
xxi.	1–5	11	22
	6–11	12	24
	15, 16	14	28
	17–19	15	30
	23–27	25	50
	28–32	26	52
	33–41	27	54
	42–46	28	56
xxii.	1–14	29	58
	15–22	30	60
	29–33	32	64
	41–46	35	70
xxiii.	1–7	36	72
	8–12	37	74
	13–15	38	76
	16–24	39	78
	25–28	40	80
	29–36	41	82
	37–39	42	84
xxvi.	1 5	44	88
	14–16	45	90
	20–25	47	94

	NO.	PAGE
ST. MATT. xxvi. 26–28	49	98
31–35	55	110
36–39	57	114
39–42	59	118
44–46	60	120
47–50	61	122
51–54	63	126
56	64	128
62–68	67	134
69–74	68	136
xxvii. 3–10	70	140
11–14	71	142
15–21	74	148
24, 25	79	158
39–43	84	168
46	93	186
50–53	86	172
62–66	98	196
xxviii. 9, 10	99	188
ST. MARK, i. 12, 13	1	2
iv. 26–29	104	208
x. 32–34	8	16
xi. 15–19	16	32
20–26	17	34
xii. 28–31	33	66
32–34	34	68
41–44	43	86
xiv. 3–9	10	20
37–40	58	116
55–61	66	132
xv. 16–20	75	150
21	81	162
xvi. 1–7	99	188
ST. LUKE, i. 26–38	103	206
iv. 5–8	4	8
13	5	10
ix. 23–27	7	14
xix. 39, 40	14	28
41–44	13	26

		NO.	PAGE
ST: LUKE, xx.	27–36	31	62
	38	32	64
xxii.	7–13	46	92
	14–18	48	96
	19, 20	49	98
	24–27	50	100
	31–34	55	110
	35–38	56	112
	41–44	57	114
	47, 48	61	122
	52, 53	62	124
	60–62	69	138
xxiii.	5–12	73	146
	27–31	80	160
	34	90	180
	39–43	85	170
	42, 43	91	182
	44, 45	86	172
	46	96	192
	47–49	87	174
ST. JOHN, xi.	47–53	9	18
xii.	1–8	10	20
	20–24	18	36
	25, 26	19	38
	27–30	20	40
	31–33	21	42
	34–36	22	44
	37–43	23	47
	44–50	24	48
xiii.	1–7	51	102
	8–11	52	104
	12–17	53	106
	18–32	54	108
xviii.	3–7	62	124
	8, 9	64	128
	10, 11	63	126
	12–14	65	130
	19–23	65	130
	28–32	71	[illegible]

	NO.	PAGE
ST. JOHN, xviii. 33–38	72	144
xix. 4–6	76	152
7, 8	77	154
9–11	78	156
12–16	79	158
17, 18	89	178
19–22	82	164
23, 24	83	166
25–27	92	184
28	94	188
30	95	190
31–37	88	176
38–42	97	194
xx. 1–10	100	200
11–18	101	202
ACTS, i. 15–26	102	204

NOTE.—Those who wish to make systematic use of this book during the season of Lent, will find that, by beginning on Ash Wednesday and using two meditations daily, together with the seven words from the Cross on Good Friday, they will have gone through the whole course, as far as No. 98, by Easter Even. Nos. 99, 100, and 101, will be suitable for Easter Day and the two following days. Special meditations for Annunciation, St. Matthias, and St. Mark, will be found at the end of the book.

The following Table may assist those who desire only one Meditation for each day.

	NOS.
Ash Wednesday	1
Thursday, Friday, Saturday	2, 3, 4
First Sunday in Lent	5
Monday, Tuesday, Wednesday ...	11, 12, 13
Thursday, Friday, Saturday	16, 45, 46
Second Sunday in Lent	47
Monday, Tuesday, Wednesday ...	49, 51, 52
Thursday, Friday, Saturday	53, 57, 58
Third Sunday in Lent	59
Monday, Tuesday, Wednesday ...	60, 61, 62
Thursday, Friday, Saturday	63, 64, 65
Fourth Sunday in Lent	66
Monday, Tuesday, Wednesday ...	67, 68, 69
Thursday, Friday, Saturday	70, 71, 72
Fifth Sunday in Lent	73
Monday, Tuesday, Wednesday ...	74, 75, 76
Thursday, Friday, Saturday	77, 78, 79
Sixth Sunday in Lent...	80
Monday before Easter	83
Tuesday before Easter	84
Wednesday before Easter	85
Thursday before Easter	88
Good Friday	89–96
Easter Even	97
Easter Day	99
Easter Monday and Tuesday	100, 101
St. Matthias	102
Annunciation	103
St. Mark...	104

London : E. LONGHURST, 30 New Bridge Street, Blackfriars, and 119 Upper Kennington Lane, S.E.

By the same Author.

AIDS TO COMMUNION WITH GOD;

A Manual for Communicants.

CONTAINING

INSTRUCTION, PREPARATION, THE COMMUNION OFFICE WITH DEVOTIONS,

BOUND WITH COLLECTS, EPISTLES, GOSPELS.

Cloth, price 1*s.*, *by post*, 1*s.* 1*d.*; *handsomely bound, gilt lettered, red edges, price* 1*s.* 6*d.*, *by post*, 1*s.* 7½*d.*

A CHEAP EDITION without the Epistles, &c.

6d., by post, 7d.

Tenth Thousand now ready.

'Thank you for your excellent "Manual for Holy Communion."'
BISHOP OF LINCOLN.

FOUR METRICAL LITANIES FOR CHILDREN'S SERVICES.

Twentieth Thousand. One penny, cloth.

1, 2

LONDON: E. LONGHURST, CHURCH BOOKSELLER,
30 New Bridge Street, Blackfriars,
and 119 Upper Kennington Lane, S.E.